

## How to talk so people listen

Elizabeth Stokoe heads up the  
coverage from Annual Conference



The British  
Psychological Society  
Promoting excellence in psychology

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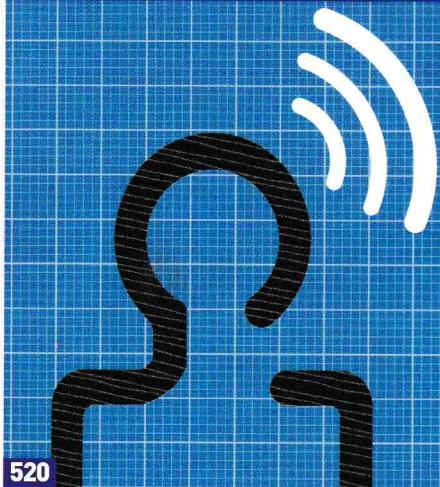
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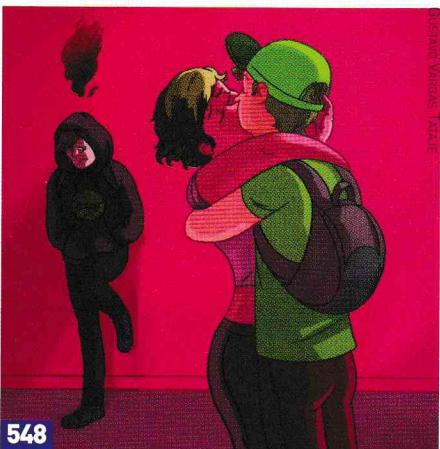
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### How to talk so people listen

Elizabeth Stokoe heads up our coverage from the Society's Annual Conference, and previews her appearance in 'The Psychologist presents at Latitude Festival' in July

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***The Psychologist*** is the monthly publication of The British Psychological Society. It provides a forum for communication, discussion and controversy among all members of the Society, and aims to fulfil the main object of the Royal Charter, 'to promote the advancement and diffusion of a knowledge of psychology pure and applied'.

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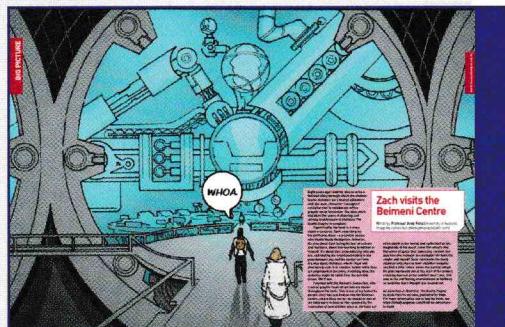
## the issue

It's a bit of a running joke in our office that my staff don't listen to a word I say, and when I was a lecturer one student feedback form declared 'Dr Sutton is afflicted with an unfortunately monotone voice'. So I will be particularly attentive this July as I host 'The Psychologist presents at Latitude Festival', which is due to feature Professor Elizabeth Stokoe on 'how to talk so people listen'.

Professor Stokoe certainly gripped the audience at the Society's Annual Conference, and our coverage on p.520 begins with a report and more from her. It was also great to hear her say that featuring in our pages in 2013 led to many rewarding and far-flung opportunities for public engagement and research. We are always on the look out for contributions, so do get in touch.

You will find lots more conference reports on our website, alongside other exclusive material. And there's even more in our iOS / Android apps for *The Psychologist* and the Research Digest. We are 'talking' on numerous channels: I hope you are tuning in and like what you hear.

**Dr Jon Sutton**  
Managing Editor @psychmag



**Big picture** centre-page pull-out an adventure in statistics, with **Andy Field**

# Taking a stand on social issues

Several items included on your June edition's letters page have moved me to write in. I myself am not a psychologist but an independent mental health commentator; a survivor of the 'health services' who has cared long-term for close family members. I am in no doubt about the fact that a lot of what we have had to deal with in our lives has been iatrogenically caused, and that the toll taken by intimate involvement with these two first-degree family members robbed me of my own health.

The letters from Aurora Dunn and Mike Davies demonstrate such misunderstanding of Peter Kinderman's views and position on such subjects that I feel compelled to comment. The first letter interests me because it seems to imply that it's possible to be non-political. I don't believe that it is. Ms Dunn seems to suggest that we should consider restraining ourselves from taking action now because the same ideas will not be popular or, perhaps, even credible in the future. Well, that consideration doesn't seem to deter anyone else from making claims and forging ahead in the name of science.

I don't agree with Mr Davies's insinuation that someone with a strong sense of the social origins of psychological problems – something most laypeople take as read – is in the wrong profession. Indeed, we can all feel some hope when authentic people with palpable integrity and the passion to back it up – like Jamie Hacker Hughes and Peter Kinderman – are elected successively to the BPS's highest post. But I am frankly disturbed by the openly aggressive tone of his criticism. As disappointed as certain people will always be with election results when the successful candidate is not to their taste, accepting that he or she with the most votes has won is what democracy is all about. Tellingly, Mr Davies's outburst reaches its climax in the statement 'it is all our professional lives at stake'. How interesting. This is not about the issues, then... about how we in beleaguered families are enabled to cope, or otherwise; are stigmatised, and so on. It's about ensuring the continuance of well-paid jobs for psychologists and aiming 'to influence the government of the value of psychology to society' (sic).

The type of organisation that Peter Kinderman is eminently qualified to lead should by rights be deeply concerned by such contemporary pressing issues as these, and I know that Peter himself is most definitely someone who lives and works tirelessly in the real world'. He gets himself out there, listens to and collaborates with us in the community, humbly conversing



with people from all walks of life – at meetings, in phone conversations, through social media and email. Consequently, he has a lot of support from outside the BPS too. It is surely a strength rather than a weakness that he is someone with the courage of his convictions who yet clearly feels open to learn and modify his views accordingly. I imagine that Peter's forthright nature and proactive behaviour are partly what appealed to the organisation's electorate, and I predict that he will achieve a great deal as President, leaving the BPS in a stronger position by the end of his term.

Nicky Hayward

Bath

## THE PSYCHOLOGIST NEEDS YOU!

contribute

### Letters

These pages are central to *The Psychologist*'s role as a forum for communication, discussion and controversy among all members of the Society, and we welcome your contributions. Send e-mails marked 'Letter for publication' to [psychologist@bps.org.uk](mailto:psychologist@bps.org.uk); or write to the Leicester office.



Letters over 500 words are less likely to be published. The editor reserves the right to edit or publish extracts from letters. Letters to the editor are not normally acknowledged, and space does not permit the publication of every letter received.

### ...and much more

We rely on your submissions throughout the publication, and in return we help you to get your message across to a large and diverse audience.

'Reach the largest, most diverse audience of psychologists in the UK (as well as many others around the world); work with a wonderfully supportive editorial team; submit thought pieces, reviews, interviews, analytic work, and a whole lot more. Start writing for *The Psychologist* now before you think of something else infinitely less important to do!' Robert Sternberg, Oklahoma State University

For details of all the available options, plus our policies and what to do if you feel these have not been followed, see [www.thepsychologist.org.uk/contribute](http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk/contribute)

Reading the June issue of *The Psychologist* was an unusually emotional experience. Some contributions confirmed powerfully for me just how much our discipline and profession have to offer society, and made me feel proud to be a psychologist. David Harper ('Beyond individual therapy'), for example, demonstrated clearly just how much we know about the psychological effects of the events and circumstances of people's lives, and argued persuasively for our duty to intervene at a social level and to 'speak truth to power' about the likely psychological impact of policies. Jamie Hacker Hughes's practical suggestion that media training should form part of all applied postgraduate psychology programmes would be a great start.

Jamie has also said that the place he spent most time as BPS President was Westminster. That strikes me as fitting if our

discipline is going to fulfil the mission we espouse on our website, namely to 'apply psychology for the public good'. Similarly, I was hugely encouraged (as are many others, judging by social media) that our new President, Peter Kinderman, is committed to ensuring that psychology 'does something useful' and improves the wellbeing of citizens. Surely that is the ultimate point of all our endeavours, both academic and applied.

I was also heartened to see him promoting a truly psychological approach to human distress rather than, as some have done in the past, 'jumping ship' (Harper et al., 2007) to a medicalised understanding or to the somewhat strange notion of 'abnormal psychology'. Surely the findings of psychology are the findings of psychology, however distressing our experiences. I was therefore

somewhat surprised and disheartened to see him criticised for this, for mentioning politics and for (God forbid!) 'taking an active approach to influencing social issues and policy'. Surely if we believe that psychology has useful insights (and why are we in this business if we don't?), then we owe it to our fellow citizens to share that knowledge, to do what it says on our tin and 'apply psychology for the public good'.

**Anne Cooke**

Salomons Centre for Applied Psychology  
Canterbury Christ Church University

#### Reference

Harper, D., Cromby, J., Reavey, P. et al. (2007). Don't jump ship! New approaches in teaching mental health to undergraduates. *The Psychologist*, 20, 302-304.

Mike Davies (Letters, June 2016) calls for BPS President Peter Kinderman to be 'impeached' for repeating an anecdote about Margaret Thatcher. He claims that Kinderman spreads his ideas by intimidation, then threatens Kinderman with sanctions simply for recounting an amusing personal episode. In the same issue, another letter urges extreme caution about Kinderman's suggestion that psychology engage more with policy. Both letters seemingly reflect the view that psychology should somehow be neutral, value-free and disengaged from politics. There are at least three reasons why this view is mistaken.

First, psychology studies people, and people (including all psychologists themselves) are already ethical, moral and political, already driven by values and guided by principles. Second, psychology is already being (mis)used as a tool of political policy in the work of the Behavioural Insights Team or 'nudge unit' (Cromby & Willis, 2014). Third, if we don't engage with politics and policy, we won't purge psychology of their influence anyway: we will simply blind ourselves to their effects.

For these reasons, arguing that psychology should not engage with political policy is itself a profoundly political act.

**Dr John Cromby**  
University of Leicester

#### Reference

Cromby, J. & Willis, M.E.H. (2014). Nudging into subjectification: Governmentality and psychometrics. *Critical Social Policy*, 34(2), 241-259.

In his May 'One on one' new Society President Peter Kinderman states that psychologists should be 'fighting for social justice'. He ends by suggesting that the BPS should 'do better' in almost every area, and that psychologists should be 'out there' on the radio, on TV etc.

The BPS produces a considerable number of publications that define policy. Some are strategic, so it would be expected that they would provide guidance on the society that the profession is orientated to achieve. Perhaps a definition of 'better' can be found.

The BPS Division of Occupational Psychology's Strategic Plan for 2016-20 could, it is hoped, indicate a societal level objective. In fact it includes only nods to this, in 'The benefit that occupational psychology brings to the public' and a closing statement that we should

'Maximise the influence of psychology on public policy'. Could we really evaluate progress against this in 2020?

Perhaps it is at the level of individual members that objectives for societal change might be found. Perhaps the Society should promote a reflective culture where members ask themselves, maybe on a daily basis, questions such as 'Is what I have done today a positive contribution to the kind of Society I want to achieve?' Religions have for thousands of years taught that love was the ultimate objective. Perhaps psychology's ultimate objective is to facilitate a more loving Society? Is the research you are undertaking likely to have a positive impact on the love experienced in society? Will the consultancy you are undertaking facilitate a more loving group, organisation or individual?

**Dr Chris Ridgeway**  
Leeds

## 'Let's stop constructing illnesses'

I felt compelled to write to express how refreshing and stimulating I've found a lot of the content in *The Psychologist's* last couple of issues. Many of the pieces have resonated with me, as themes have arisen acknowledging the social roots of human experience and challenging its pathologisation.

A couple of years back I submitted an article to be considered for the 'New voices' feature of this magazine, and was disappointed that the piece wasn't accepted for publication. It addressed the issue of the overmedicalisation of low mood, noting trends in prescribing of antidepressants and social explanation for this. The Editor noted that the arguments I presented were well rehearsed and didn't contribute enough innovative thinking. I agreed that a substantial proportion of what I said had already been said elsewhere, but was frustrated because in several years of subscription to *The Psychologist* I hadn't yet seen any such material in its pages.

It's not until recent months that this has changed, and there seems to have been something of an explosion of BPS content and activity that resonates with my values! In March I attended History of Mental Health, a joint conference between the BPS History & Philosophy of Psychology Section and the Critical Psychiatry Network. It was great to connect with so many people who hold

similar values to me when it comes to mental health (you can read a report at [www.thepsychologist.org.uk/critical-and-historical-accounts](http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk/critical-and-historical-accounts)). One of the keynote speakers was Joanna Moncrieff, who gave an intriguing, informative and critical overview of the history of psychiatric drugs. I was very happy to see a written account of this - 'Opium and the people' - in April's issue of this publication. I also find it very heartening and refreshing to see our new President Peter Kinderman's Mental Health Manifesto, which calls for understanding people's difficulties in the context of their lives and society, rather than throwing them into diagnostic categories and 'treating' them coercively and relentlessly with medication that, as raised in Moncrieff's account, is often likely to be doing more harm than good.

To illustrate my point, I refer to an intriguing article I read recently about the link between depression and inflammation. The piece first notes that inflammation is caused by lifestyle factors such as poor diet and inactivity, and goes on to relay some evidence that depression could be the result of an allergic reaction to inflammation. Given that we know that both depression and the lifestyle factors associated with inflammation are on the up, and that eating well and exercising are known to have positive effects on mood as well as reducing inflammation, this intuitively makes some sense. The logical conclusion, to me at least, is that depression can be prevented and treated,

at least in part, by living a healthy lifestyle – amazing! – I already knew this, but it was interesting and refreshing to see a biological explanation for depression converging with this belief! However, the authors fail to acknowledge this implication, instead highlighting the argument that depression could therefore be 'rebranded as an infection disease'. I find it beyond frustrating that where a plainly obvious way of tackling the root causes of depression is presented, people are still hell-bent on finding a way to medicalise the experience and mask the 'symptoms' with drugs.

In May's issue of *The Psychologist*, Ella Rhodes called for readers' opinions on what impact looks like in psychology. My personal take is that psychology will only make its impact when critical, non-medical, psychological and sociological accounts of mental distress begin to be taken seriously and become embedded in practice and culture. Psychology has the power to provide insight into how society, relationships and lifestyle impact on our physical and mental wellbeing, which in turn unlocks knowledge about how best to cultivate wellness on individual and societal levels. However, this knowledge cannot possibly have any real impact until we start to let go of the pathologisation of human experience. Let's stop constructing illnesses and start constructing a culture conducive to wellness.

Lauren Bishop  
Poole, Dorset

## NOTICEBOARD

I am recruiting participants for my final MSc thesis that I am completing at Coventry University. I wish to use a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview in order to explore the competencies that are subjective to the role of an occupational psychologist with an aim to develop a competency framework.

The questionnaire would take no longer than 10 minutes and the interview would be done via telephone at a time that is best for the participant, lasting no longer than 30 minutes.

Participants will only be identified by a participant number in order to confirm anonymity and all data will be confidential.

If you are an occupational psychologist or work in the field of occupational psychology, you would be a perfect fit for this research and I would really appreciate if you could take the time to do so.

Jessica Bird  
bird\_93@hotmail.co.uk

## Faith and therapy

With regard to Yeni Adewoye's article 'Having faith in mind' (April 2016) calling for a greater integration of religion in therapy, I appreciate the sentiment but reject the solution.

It is a bidirectional problem. In general, the church has very limited knowledge about mental health (just as the majority of the population do). In general, mental health professionals have very limited knowledge about the Christian faith.

It is an awful state of affairs that people feel unable to discuss mental health within their church family but that is a problem that is being addressed internally. Christian blog websites such as MorePrecious.co.uk regularly carry articles about coping with depression, anorexia and PTSD. Biblical Counselling UK is a new movement specifically dedicated to educating and training

Christians across the country in dealing with mental health ([www.biblicalcounselling.org.uk](http://www.biblicalcounselling.org.uk)). The work of Adewoye's colleague is a valid example of personalising Scripture within a structured psychological approach.

Incorporating faith into therapy is so much more than 'adding relevant Christian items' and 'religious examples'. Incorporating therapy into faith is so much more than saying 'Jesus loves you. Stop worrying.'

It would be inappropriate for someone without the client's faith to implement a faith-based therapy, regardless of any 'training' – faith cannot be taught. I urge Christians across the UK who are struggling with mental health, or know someone who is, to seek out Biblical counselling.

Abby Midgley  
Third-year psychology student  
Sheffield

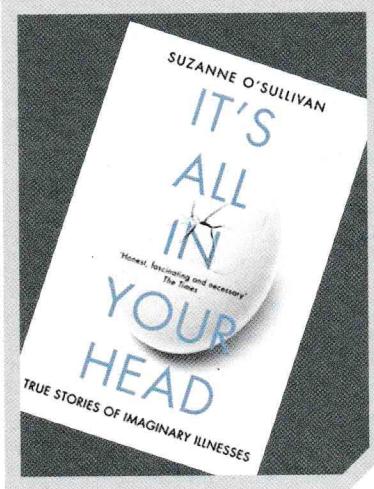
# Flawed assumptions?

The June edition of *The Psychologist* reported on Suzanne O'Sullivan's *It's All In Your Head: True Stories of Imaginary Illness* winning the 2016 Wellcome Book Prize. Enticed by the promise of insights into the intriguing phenomenon of psychosomatic illness, I'd read the book soon after publication. I wasn't so much disappointed by it, as alarmed. Dr O'Sullivan's argument for the imaginary illness of her subtitle is based, unless I've completely misunderstood, on two fundamentally flawed assumptions.

The first is that being unable to identify any organic cause for physical symptoms means that the symptoms have no organic cause. It's a risky assumption. The history of medicine is replete with examples of elusive organic causes the existence of which was long denied – from Semmelweis's contagion theory to *Helicobacter pylori*.

The second flawed assumption relates to the relationship between body and mind. Joan Bakewell, chair of the Wellcome judges and quoted in the feature in *The Psychologist*, points out that the divide between the physical and the mental is being increasingly challenged. Indeed it is, but Dr O'Sullivan's challenge assumes that an entity called 'the mind' can exert a powerful influence over another entity called 'the body'. The nature of the body is well established. The mind, not so much. Even when discussing the brain–mind distinction Dr O'Sullivan talks of the brain and mind being 'interdependent on each other' without explaining what she means by 'the mind'.

Defining 'the mind' isn't straightforward. The Cartesian mind–body model has been challenged by such luminaries



as Gilbert Ryle, Daniel Dennett and Antonio Damasio. John Bowlby in *Attachment* also tackles the knotty problem of 'emotion' and finds the term so unhelpful he avoids using it in the rest of his trilogy. Yet despite the concepts of 'mind' and 'emotion' being central to her thesis, Dr O'Sullivan uses the words liberally without reference to the debate.

It's perfectly possible, as the author suggests, that stress, anxiety and past trauma cause illness. But they can do that via the brain. One doesn't need to posit a construct such as 'the mind' to come up with hypotheses for potential organic causes. Nor does one need to appeal to Freud for an explanation as O'Sullivan does, claiming that 'the twenty-first century has brought no great advances to a better understanding of the mechanism for this disorder'. The disorder? Hysteria.

People who are experiencing seizures, paralysis or blindness, whatever the cause, have organic illness. The absence of an apparent organic cause does not make the illness imaginary. We just don't know what causes it. Suggesting it's 'the mind' simply opens a can of worms.

**Sue Gerrard**  
Market Drayton  
Shropshire

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

A few people have asked me what I want to achieve from a term as BPS President. The campaign to turn the BPS into the Royal College of Psychologists is now rather quiet, but it continues to offer a vision for the role of the Society – to take its place with calm authority among the respected agents of civic society; to be one of the core institutions of professional and public life.

Assiduous readers of *The Psychologist* will also have seen that I have attracted some constructive criticism about what is perceived by some to be a political stance. I am strongly motivated by the philosophy that, when faced with policies that impact on our profession, and on the clients we serve as professionals, it is at least as much of a political statement to say or do nothing as it is political to speak out. I don't think the BPS should tacitly support injustice through inaction, but instead we should promote the Society's charitable objects '...the advancement and diffusion of a knowledge of psychology pure and applied...' in the best way we can.

Over the past month, we've seen collaboration with the Royal Society to discuss the robustness and replicability of our science, and several appearances of BPS members at events in the Houses of Parliament, including a party on the terrace of the House of Commons, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Society's Division of Clinical Psychology. We've been present in the print and broadcast media, and (in what is likely to lead to more angry correspondence) I took the opportunity recently to march through the streets of York, alongside colleagues calling for proper investment in mental health services in the city. It is ridiculous, in one of the wealthiest nations on earth, to be fighting for the most basic of social services.

My most recent engagement was to sign, alongside the Minister for Care Services, Alistair Burt MP, the STOMP pledge, a multidisciplinary campaign to stop the excessive use of psychotropic medication for people with learning disabilities. Despite our best efforts, some things are difficult to measure. But my strong impression of that event was that the BPS has started to achieve the authoritative civic presence we desire.

The next few months will see more of the same – consultations on the replacement of bursaries with loans for many healthcare students, and the resources necessary to deliver commitments to increased access to psychological therapies in the NHS, multi-professional action to promote perinatal mental health and the psychological wellbeing of both the NHS workforce and employees in general, the promotion of psychological understanding in the criminal justice system and working with our colleagues to embed multidisciplinary, co-produced, formulations in health and social care.

Our peers respect the values, professional skills and science that psychology can bring to such campaigns. But, I would argue, we need to be actively engaged rather than merely comment from ivory towers built around the distant perimeter of the field of play.



**Peter Kinderman** is President of the British Psychological Society. Contact him at [PresidentsOffice@bps.org.uk](mailto:PresidentsOffice@bps.org.uk) or follow on Twitter: @peterkinderman.



# Perceptions of pay fairness

I am a human resources specialist and a graduate student of organisational psychology who tries to find scientific answers to questions posed at work. For example, I keep hearing many complaints about underpaid wages and apparently it is a universal phenomenon ([tinyurl.com/gwx5hd](http://tinyurl.com/gwx5hd)). Many think that companies try to pocket profits for shareholders by underpaying employees. I know from my professional experience that it is actually not the case. And it made sense when I read about the phenomenon of 'gift exchange' at the workplace ([tinyurl.com/h5otscg](http://tinyurl.com/h5otscg)). Employers have incentives to offer above-market wage so that employees put more effort at work, positively reciprocating the 'gift' initially offered. Think about it. If your employer pays you more than you deserve, wouldn't you like to show more effort at work?

On the other hand, if employees think that they are getting paid less than they deserve, they want to inflict punishment. The game theory of fairness ([tinyurl.com/gpjpcek](http://tinyurl.com/gpjpcek)) suggests that 'people will in some situations not only refuse to help others, but will sacrifice to hurt others who are being unfair. Alas, companies usually end up with overpaid employees who actually think they are underpaid and, as a result, willing to perform counterproductive work behaviour!'

But what makes the perception of fair/unfair wage? What makes one think what is 'deserved'? One research I have come across to is the study on American soldiers ([tinyurl.com/h77hlp5](http://tinyurl.com/h77hlp5)), which found an anomaly: the military police were more satisfied with slow promotions than air force personnel, who had rapid promotions. It led to the introduction of the phenomenon of relative deprivation: people's conceptions of fairness are based on comparisons with salient others. So is this the basis of the presumption of being underpaid?

Regardless of its validity, I have seen at work that the thought of being in a relatively deprived position creates a psychologically disturbed mental state that requires some form of justification. Festinger's seminal experiment ([tinyurl.com/zvc9dfy](http://tinyurl.com/zvc9dfy)) was useful in making sense of this phenomenon: Participants were first



asked to do boring and tedious tasks, and then to tell someone else that the tasks were actually interesting. Participants, who were paid \$20, did not have any problem in lying. But participants, who were paid \$1, had conflicting cognitions, no justification to lie. Hence they internalized the attitude they were induced to express and claimed that they actually enjoyed doing the tasks. Therefore, a dissonance-reducing strategy is either internal self-deception or finding an external justification!

So, when an already overpaid employee is asking for more, does it mean that he actually feels socially deprived and is unable to get over the disturbed feeling? If so, how should it be addressed? Should we impose self-deception on employees through the working out of love ([tinyurl.com/gkmmh](http://tinyurl.com/gkmmh)) narrative (i.e. creating an illusion)? Or should we put more effort and, first, try to understand particular social comparisons that each employee cognitively constructs and, then, explain why they are wrong? In other words, should we treat employees as human capital or human beings?

Nejdan Yıldız

Istanbul, Turkey

## Feeling 'more' not 'better'

I write in response to the article 'How often does psychotherapy make people feel worse' (Digest, May 2016). I did not read the cited article so am basing my response solely on the report in *The Psychologist*.

What particularly caught my attention was the notion of 'bad lasting effects'. I am curious as to what is meant by 'bad' and what's a 'lasting

effect'. The gist of the article seems to indicate that therapists need to always have 'good' or 'happy' outcomes for their clients.

As a practising integrative psychotherapist my mantra has always been that it is not about the client feeling better but about the client feeling more. That is to say the therapeutic experience opens the client up to feel a range of

emotions that may have been kept down. To do otherwise and to focus on them feeling better merely 'patches them up' without dealing with what is going on for them. The goal I would have thought is the integration for the client of their range of feelings. (I need to give credit here to my fantastic training supervisor who left me with this mantra and expression.)

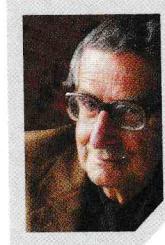
In some way trying to avoid the clients feeling 'bad' does them a disservice, implying that we as practitioners are merely trying to improve the outcome statistics. I think this would be a very disingenuous position to work from both for the client and the profession.

Paul Hogan  
Dublin

# Individual differences and replication

The centennial year of the birth of Hans Eysenck should remind us of the vital role played by individual differences in personality, cognitive abilities and the like; as he stated in 1965: 'Individuals do differ... and it seems to me that psychology will never advance very far without a recognition of the complexities which are produced by this fact of personality.'

As highlighted in the title of his 1977 book *Psychology Is About People*, these individual differences are just as important as cognitive mechanisms and neural processes. To continue to ignore them does nothing to



address one major reason for the non-replication of psychological effects. It is as if a research chemist were content to use pieces of laboratory equipment with scant regard to their varied and unknown electrochemical properties. As they would have failed to replicate the exact methodology, how likely is it that other experimental chemists would replicate their findings?

In psychology, individual characteristics affect behaviour in most situations – even purely experimental ones, where effect sizes tend to be small compared with the

unexplained 'error' term, much of it concealing systematic individual differences which may be influencing experimental factors in varied and unknown ways. It is futile lamenting replication failures if we do not recognise the importance of the individual characteristics of participants in psychological studies.

We should take Eysenck's warning seriously: Psychology shall not advance very far if we continue to ignore this basic fact of human psychology.

**Professor Philip Corr**  
City University London; President, International Society for the Study of Individual Differences; and Co-Founding President, British Society for the Psychology of Individual Differences

## Eysenck – 'aloof, dismissive'

In the March edition of *The Psychologist* Philip Corr ('The centenary of a maverick') made a welcome attempt to present the pros and cons of Hans Eysenck's substantial contribution to psychology. I wish he had gone a little further to try to account for Eysenck's over-confident foray into the vexed field of crime and personality. There he would have found that Eysenck (1964) attributed criminality to levels of extroversion and anxiety causing a failure in conditioning that in his opinion could be remedied by early childhood identification and the administration of appropriate drugs.

In drawing such a conclusion, Eysenck relied most on the array of Raymond Cattell's second-order 16PF factors that Frank Warburton (1965) (Professor of Experimental Education in Manchester University) had obtained from a sample of 38 adult males in the US Joliet prison (Eysenck, 1964, Table 4, p.194).

Because I happened to have a batch of similar 16PF data from a larger sample of New Zealand prisoners of each sex already to hand, I tried to validate Eysenck's important finding (Taylor, 1968). But to my surprise my data did not match Warburton's. Subsequently a colleague, Ronald Francis found a similar discrepancy with data from his sample of Australian adult male prisoners (Francis & Taylor, 1968).

In corresponding with Warburton, he became aware of having made a statistical

blunder when appraising his data, and he promised to disclose it in his very next publication. Sadly he died shortly afterwards, and before being able to put the record straight. However, I sent copies of my dataset and correspondence with Warburton to Eysenck, and made arrangements to discuss the matter with him during my next sabbatical visit to London.

There I found the man aloof, dismissive, and not accepting the need to validate the evidence on which his bold assertions lay. So much, I thought, for the man who could not bear to admit he too had made a mistake in not checking his anchor, and was unwilling to correct the record for Warburton.

**A.J.W. Taylor PhD, FBPsS**  
Emeritus Professor of Psychology  
Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

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## IAPT AND SECONDARY MENTAL HEALTH

In my letter to *The Psychologist* in the March 2014 issue, I wondered how the IAPT economic model would be sustained. My argument then was 'how low can you go before you get zero return from therapy'. Many NHS mental health trusts throughout the country have chosen to become providers on the basis that, much like the National Lottery, 'you have to be in it to win it'. Once the economic model becomes non-sustainable and the service is not re-commissioned, organisations seem to be looking elsewhere to deploy staff and IAPT methodology with its relentless pursuit of efficiency through performance micromanagement. Secondary mental health care psychological services seem to be the obvious target. However, the imposition of the IAPT model onto secondary care is a misfit.

Secondary mental health is an area of complexity requiring a core training and high level of competency in order to work with people with highly complex multifactorial needs. Having completed a Diploma in CBT accredited by the BACP, I would not consider myself competent to work in secondary care without also having core training as a counselling psychologist. I also have the added experience of being a qualified mental health nurse. I do not believe that there is a fast-track method of training in this complex area. There is no number of in-house workshops or CPD events that can equate to a full training in mental health clinical practice.

To impose anything other than rigorously trained staff on vulnerable people would in all likelihood become a safeguarding issue. Furthermore, the prescription of ever more brief interventions, as are typically found within the IAPT context, to treat serious mental illnesses, such as ACT for psychosis, is likely to deny individuals access to the full level 3 skills that are said to be defining characteristics of the practitioner psychologist.

**Tom Elliot CPsychol, AFBPsS**  
Ramsgate

# Treating the individual

I hope that other readers have rushed to reassure Corinne Lowry (Letters, May 2016) that individualised, tailored therapy to patients/clients is available and alive and well in the NHS, certainly as practised by (mainly) clinical psychologists in clinical health psychology. It must be horrible indeed for people coming to any support service to feel like they are just a cog in a wheel, being treated as part of a system and not like a unique human being. It's up to therapists and patients alike to insist that the system works for our best benefit.

Marie Stewart

Principal Clinical Psychologist  
Royal Preston Hospital

I read Corinne Lowry's letter 'A therapy for each client' (May, 2016) and found myself reflecting upon the interventions currently recommended for children and young people in the NICE guidelines. When reading each of the guidelines for the individual presentations we work with in CAMHS, I was not surprised that CBT is recommended as an intervention for all of them. I was, however, surprised by the lack of alternative treatment options recommended.

Within the NICE surveillance programme review documents, research is identified indicating that alternative

interventions to CBT are effective. For example, a randomised controlled trial has found EMDR reduced symptoms of PTSD in children (Ahmad et al., 2007). These pieces of research, however, are not currently deemed to be enough to warrant an update of the guidelines.

It is not unknown for CAMHS services to employ CBT therapists and CAMHS practitioners instead of clinical psychologists – possibly as a result of both recruitment and funding issues. If the guidelines that we follow are, on the whole, recommending CBT, then it makes sense for NHS services to do this. Given

this, are we at risk of undervaluing the varied treatment approaches that psychologists can offer, resulting in children and young people not being offered individualised therapy options as routinely as they should in CAMHS?

It feels that we as CAMHS psychology staff may need to take more ownership of this issue. Do we need to be conducting more research into the effectiveness of interventions such as EMDR, CAT, DBT and ACT for children and young people? If this research were to show such interventions to be effective, the guidelines we follow to ensure our practice is evidence-based, could be updated to reflect a wider range of treatment options that may be more suited to the individuals we treat.

Jessica May  
Wirral

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# Co-producing and co-publishing

Traditional approaches and attitudes within health services, marked by large power differentials between service users and professionals, are currently subject to vast change. This developing revision of attitudes, approaches and narratives has been facilitated and accelerated by the growing involvement and co-production of service design by service user-led groups. Many mental health organisations are taking a lead role in challenging dominant discourses and power relations.

Co-produced research and the dissemination of clinical practice is an important vehicle in the promotion and development of transformative change in the mental health system. At the service in which we work, we are keen to promote this agenda. For a time, we have been working with someone currently detained under the Mental Health Act. Over the past 18 months she has taken a lead role in regaining power and responsibility over her life (having previously experienced this as being taken away from her). The drastic transformation and shift in her role

and the empowerment she has created is in stark contrast to the typically marginalised and disenfranchised position some service users experience during detention under the Mental Health Act.

We have been keen to co-produce an article highlighting how collaboration and co-production alongside this service user and her team have enabled and facilitated a shift in the power differential and have enhanced subjective wellbeing. It would not be helpful or appropriate to do this without the person being central to this process, of course. In fact, she is keen to take a lead role and reflect upon her experience and contribute equally to the production of a paper.

There are, however, some ethical dilemmas to consider. Publishing a paper co-produced with a service user raises issues of confidentiality, particularly if details of psychological work are shared. Further, placing the service user in a collaborative position highlights her role as an independent person who is free to decide whether she wishes to share her

identity as part of a publication. However, mental health systems introduce complex dynamics through the required use of Mental Health and Mental Capacity Acts and raise concerns around coercion and/or appeasement. Having discussed with editors, we have followed a formal process and have considered these important dilemmas. All of the above considerations have been shared and discussed with the service user involved.

We are keen to hear about other people's experiences of co-producing research alongside service users who are also named as contributing authors, in order to share thoughts about these dilemmas, particularly within the area of secure mental health care.

**Ruth Lewis-Morton**

*Clinical Psychologist*

**Andrew Hider**

*Consultant Clinical and Forensic Psychologist, Clinical Director*

**Jane Watkins**

*Chief Operating Officer, Ludlow Street Healthcare*

## obituary

### Judith Greene (1936–2016)

Judith Greene – 'Judy' to her friends and colleagues – is easily remembered as 'A Force To Be Reckoned With', having steered a small psychology department to a position of international prominence in teaching and research. But treating Judy as a 'Force' is to overemphasise one trait at the expense of others, which she enjoyed in equal measure: her dedication to understanding the student's point of view, her astute professional editing skills, her savvy political instincts, her socialist ethic and its attendant belief in fairness and the common good, and her natural warmth and empathy.

Consider her understanding of the student's point of view. Judy knew from a decade of teaching mature students at the Birkbeck College that existing materials let down the lone adult student, so she wrote *Learning to Use Statistical Tests in Psychology* with colleague Manuela D'Oliveira, producing a successful book that, to quote a typical 5-star review, '...reads like a page turning novel'. Judy knew that there was no point in just writing 'the technically correct thing' for a bored or confused student audience, so always tried to convey ideas in a readable, approachable and enjoyable manner, to the delight of tens of thousands of students. She also authored *Thinking and Language* and *Memory, Thinking and Language*, which built upon her doctoral work on Chomskian transformational grammar and established her as both a thought leader in modern psychology and a talented writer who could clearly explain the subtleties of higher-level cognition to a wide audience.

What about her editing skills? Judy had spent years as an editor of a popular travel guide series, and as a result was capable of dramatically improving text with an uncanny combination of speed, accuracy and good taste. Within the OU

Psychology Department, she was well known for her tireless deployment of 'The Green(e) Pen' – our drafts would be returned full of green ink, shortened and clarified, once again to the ultimate delight and benefit of tens of thousands of students.

Politically savvy? That's an understatement: she was a firm, fair and principled decision maker who knew her way around funding agencies and the university administration. Attaining recognition for Open University psychology degrees by the British Psychological Society was one of her hard-fought-and-ultimately-won battles. To the BPS, 'distance teaching' seemingly fell short of the requirement that psychology students needed to understand how to conduct experiments and attain suitable lab experience. Yet Judy persuasively made the case that OU summer schools provided nothing less than boot-camp-grade intensive training, quality-controlled by rigorous external examiners from the top universities.

Always true to the socialist roots of her upbringing as the daughter of former Labour Foreign Secretary Patrick Gordon-Walker, she was eminently fair-minded and even-handed in her treatment of colleagues. Decisions were typically agreed by consensus: rarely did a meeting end until everyone around the table was on board. Judy's nuanced approach to firm-but-fair leadership was a model for us all.

Regarding her warmth and empathy, suffice it say that she was always there for staff and students alike. She was a devoted



friend and mentor to colleagues, inspiring the next generation to adopt her empathetic approach. She worked hard, and she expected her department to do the same, but the rewards were great, the laughter was infectious, and the friendships were deep and lasting.

Judy went on to become Open University Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Overseas Development, piloting the university through its first Research Assessment Exercise and establishing a unique venture in Singapore, which enabled OU courses to be offered in the context of a traditional educational establishment. She died on 24 April 2016 following a stroke four months earlier, and is survived and sorely missed by her husband Norman Gowar, Norman's children Kate and Matthew and four grandchildren, plus Judy's two sisters and one brother.

**Marc Eisenstadt**

former Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and Professor in Judith Greene's department from 1976 to 1995

#### obituary

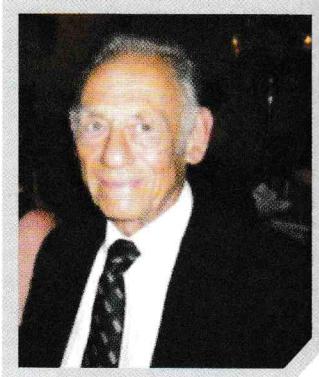
## Ludwig Lowenstein (1928–2016)

Dr L.F. Lowenstein MA, DipPsych, PhD, CPsychol, CSci, AFBPsS was registered with the Health and Care Professions Council to practise in the areas of clinical, educational and forensic

psychology. He published widely in both clinical and educational psychology as well as forensic psychology.

Ludwig was a child of the Holocaust. His family escaped Germany, they settled in New York, and Ludwig attended Stuyvesant High School and New York University. He entered the US Army and served in the 82nd Airborne Division. Ludwig was restless; he travelled around the world; he lived in Perth, Australia, finally settling in UK. He obtained his MA and PhD at London University. Over the years, Ludwig worked as a teacher, a welfare officer, a probation officer, and a staff member at mental hospitals, child guidance clinics, and residential centres for troubled teenagers.

Ludwig was made an honorary member of the Polish Medical Society, an honour that he shared with Louis Pasteur. He was also a former Chief Educational Psychologist for Hampshire, following which Ludwig created a school and therapeutic community, Allington Manor, in Hampshire for troubled adolescents. He lectured all over the world on this subject. He was twice elected to serve as a Director of the International Council of Psychologists as well as serving as their President.



## prize crossword

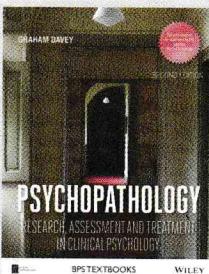
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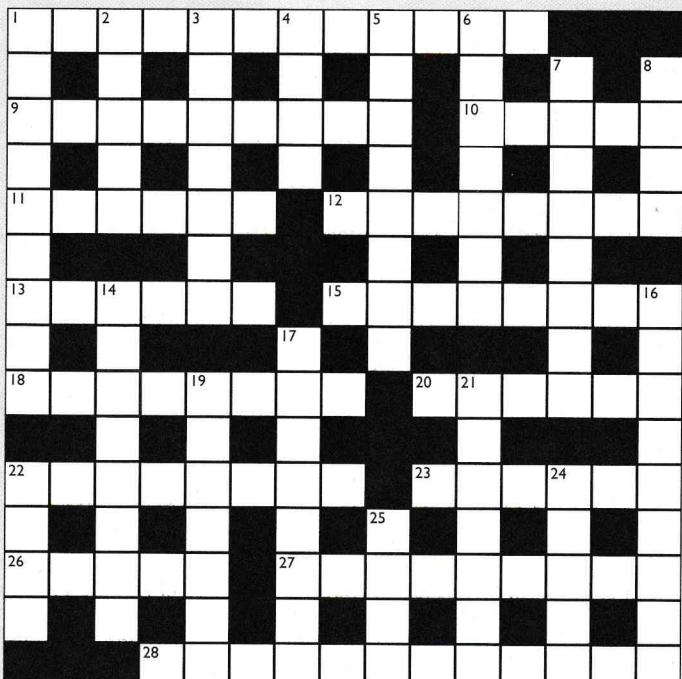
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no 87



Send your entry (photocopies accepted) marked 'prize crossword', to the Leicester office (see inside front cover) **deadline 1 august 2016. Winner of prize crossword no 86** Martin Moloney, Kettering

**no 86 solution** Across 1 Industry, 5 Maslow, 10 Placebo, 11 Recipes, 12 Cradlesong, 13 Meme, 14 Sparta, 17 Facade, 19 Sextet, 20 Retort, 23 User, 24 Overshadow, 28 Bleriot, 29 Thought, 30 Relent, 31 Graduate. Down 1 Impact, 2 Drama, 3 Smell a rat, 4 Roots, 6 Arch, 7 Lip-reader, 8 Washer, 9 Transfer, 15 Piecemeal, 16 Activity, 18 Catch cold, 21 Number, 22 Swathe, 25 Rotor, 26 Dogma, 27 Sign.

from July 2011 to July 2013. He was a Fellow of the College of Teachers and acted as a long serving Chief Examiner in Educational Psychology.

Following his work with disturbed adolescents he was practising as an expert witness for the courts. He became involved in the area of parental alienation. His website dedicated to parental alienation can be found at [www.parentalienation.info](http://www.parentalienation.info). He was involved in pursuing the inclusion of parental alienation in DSM-5 and ICD-11 and was a member of the Parental Alienation Study Group.

He will be remembered with love and affection by his family and many of his colleagues and those whom he helped along the way.

Kathleen Lowenstein  
Hampshire

#### obituary

## Dr James Outram Robinson (1931–2016)

Jim Robinson, who died in March at the age of 84, was a highly regarded psychology lecturer, and generations of students who studied psychology in Cardiff between the 1960s and the 1990s will remember him with great affection.

During his National Service in the 1950s, Jim was assigned to

the Army Educational Corps and began teaching. On demob he enrolled for a degree in psychology at the university in his native Hull where the head of department was George Westby. After graduation, Jim undertook an MSc sponsored by the local fisheries industry. One of the people he recruited for a Kipper Tasting Panel was a young woman named Liz who was to become his wife. The couple moved to South Wales where Jim worked in a Medical Research Council unit and completed a PhD on Blood Pressure and Personality, which was examined by Hans Eysenck in 1961.

The following year, George Westby was asked to set up a Psychology Department in University College Cardiff and he recruited Jim and one other lecturer to create what has since evolved into a leading and highly acclaimed School of Psychology.

Jim taught many aspects of psychology, but specialised in perception and research methods. His 1972 book *Visual Illusions* brought him international attention and fostered professional relationships and friendships (particularly with Japanese psychologists) that spanned several decades. He also maintained his interest in health psychology, supervising several related PhD projects and conducting research on the measurement and control of pain.

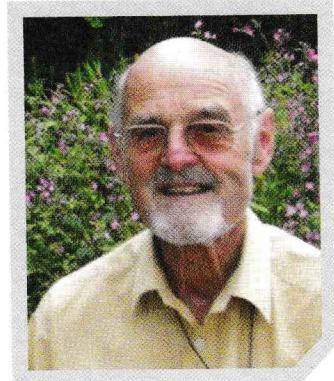
Jim was always highly student-focused and took an active pastoral role with students experiencing difficulties. He also helped students to celebrate their success; for many years Jim and Liz hosted an annual party for students and staff on the day that the degree results were announced. He was also a great enthusiast for the annual conference held at Gregynog Hall, a mansion in mid-Wales that had been bequeathed to the University of Wales. The conference experience was enhanced by social activities, including 'an entertainment' with students and staff taking part in comedy sketches and musical performances. Jim was a leading contributor, playing his euphonium, appearing in a psychology-based adaptation of the famous 'Four Yorkshiremen' sketch, and often ending the show in the guise of 'El Magnifico', with a magic routine owing more to Tommy Cooper than to Paul Daniels.

Jim was for some years Chair of the Welsh Branch of the BPS and encouraged and supported students to present their undergraduate dissertations at the annual Welsh BPS student conference. Beyond psychology, and beyond Wales, he served for many years on civil service selection boards and on the Police Complaints Board.

Jim was a man of many, many enthusiasms, among which were climbing, skiing, playing squash, Scottish dancing, fly-fishing, beekeeping and potholing. In his eighties he began to take singing lessons. He was very aware of what are now recognised as 'green issues' and was active in this area as far back as the 1970s (at which time he designed, built and installed solar panels that are still in use).

Jim was by nature a gentle man, lively, amusing and engaged, and he was an inspiration to generations of students. Teachers and lecturers have a special 'reach' – they have the opportunity to influence many young people. Jim was well aware of this, and he used his influence to great and benevolent effect.

Neil Frude  
Cardiff



#### across

- 1 Piagetian stage leads public relations to English works on right wing [12]
- 9 Terribly pure board having a good name [9]
- 10 Surrealist returned to cover one epic tale [5]
- 11 Talk during commemoration at centenary [6]
- 12 Position left for one time height [8]
- 13 Pub had food provided from the start [6]
- 15 Two ways to mature, but not with contemporaries [3,5]
- 18 Faced with surplus, man displays a deadly sin [8]
- 20 Drug addict rating employer [6]
- 22 Winning performance by half-hearted mob [8]
- 23 See Conservative in revolutionary's hat [6]
- 26 King's proclamation when caught in ebbing tide [5]
- 27 Leo, say, puts gold in a young woman's address in Naples [9]

#### down

- 1 Secretary letting on subject of advice from Spock? [9]
- 2 One living abroad with former partner and Irishman [5]
- 3 One receiving treatment takes iodine in a sort of medicine [7]
- 4 She's latest in infirmary after stroke [4]
- 5 The old record year for religious study [8]
- 6 Fulminating's something to hold on to [7]
- 7 Boozy bum endlessly in sick one out [8]
- 8 Not working to put fish in lake? On the contrary [4]
- 14 North is investing coins from France creating disorder [8]
- 16 Psychologist's first to arrange with oracle in China [9]
- 17 Retentive, perhaps, and taking therapy at last, little relative's given couch session? [8]
- 19 Characteristic feature or snake in the grass [7]
- 21 Bolting stewed, dried meat [7]
- 22 Assist with crime or a venture [4]
- 24 Capital song in company [5]
- 25 Fruit gateau glimpsed inside [4]

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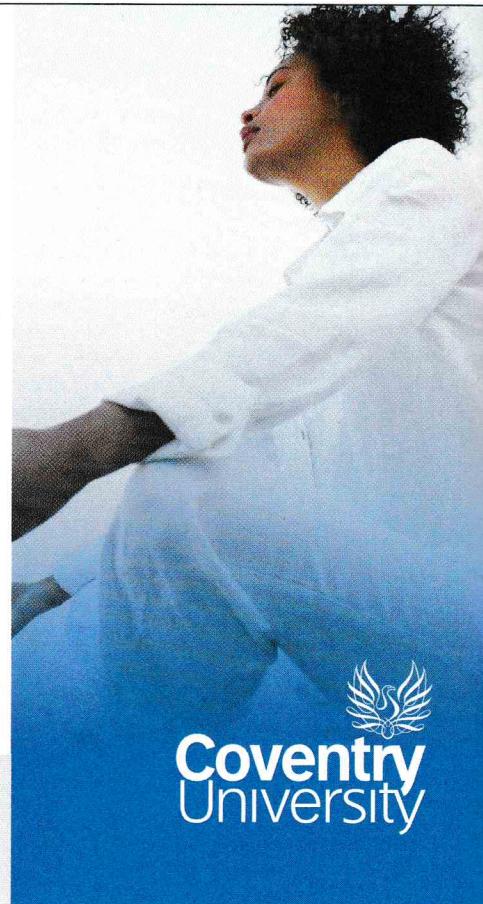
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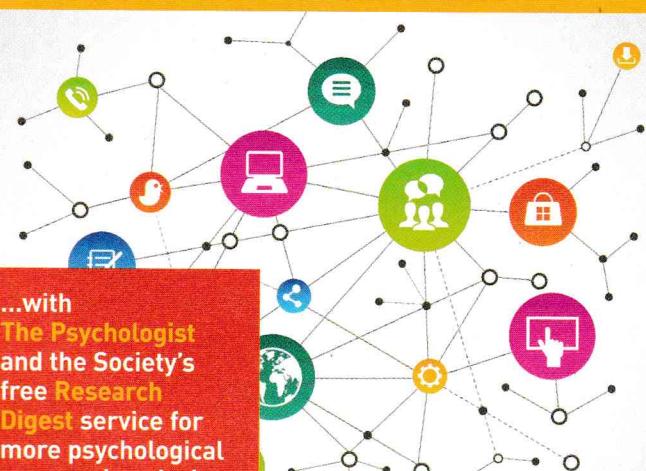
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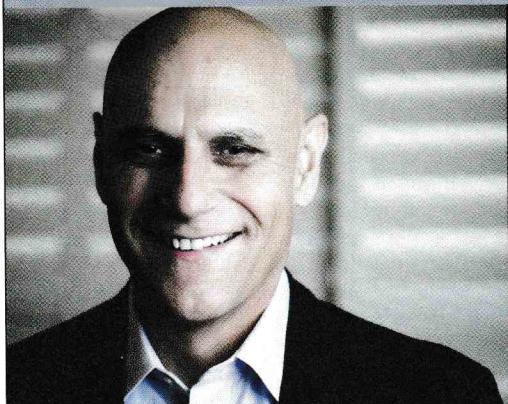
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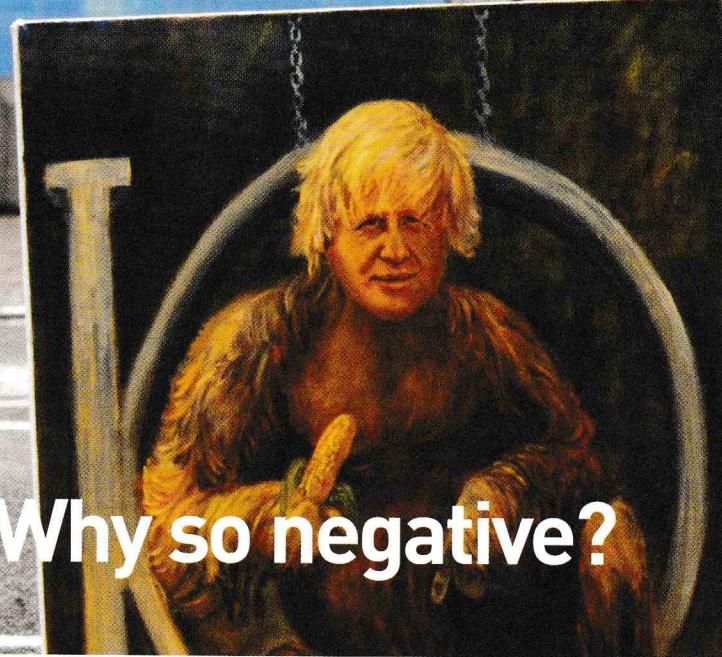
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#### About the Presenter

Steven C. Hayes, PhD, is Nevada Foundation Professor at the Department of Psychology at the University of Nevada. An author of more than thirty-five books and 500 scientific articles, his career has focused on an analysis of the nature of human language and cognition and the application of this to the understanding and alleviation of human suffering.

SECURING A BETTER FUTURE



## Why so negative?

Almost as soon as the EU Referendum was announced both 'in' and 'out' camps and their supporters accused one another of scare-mongering to 'prove' their case. The vote, to be held on 23 June, will decide whether Britain has a future as part of the European Union, but with many unpredictable side-effects whichever way the vote goes.

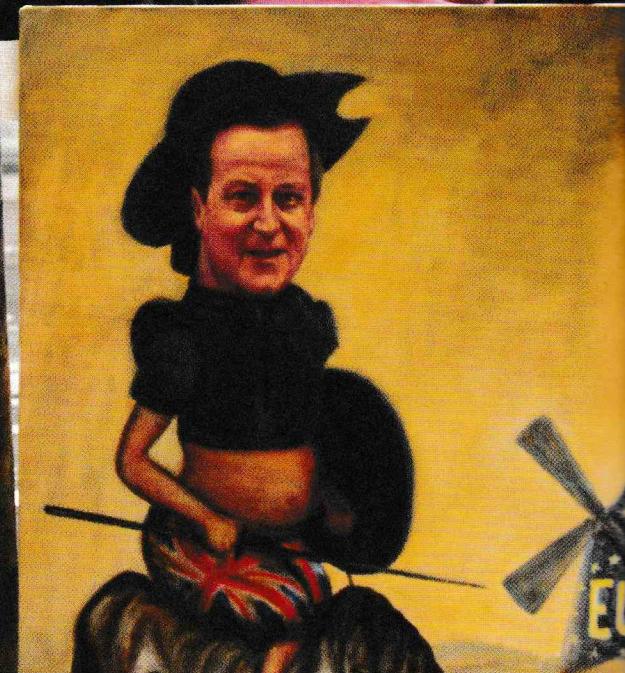
Is fear-mongering among campaigners inevitable in a vote whose outcome holds massive, and largely unknown, potential? Why have we seen this kind of campaigning so far, bringing in everything from war to the cost of family holidays? Are the campaigns likely to become increasingly fear-driven or can we expect to see other developments, in psychological terms, throughout the remainder of the campaigns? We spoke to psychologists Steve Reicher, Dean Burnett and Luciana Carraro for their opinion.

Professor Steve Reicher (University of St Andrews) said although the referendum is being posed as about Britain and Europe, people would likely view the referendum through a prism other than 'nation'. He added: 'In many ways I think the more relevant identities revolve around ordinary people vs.

elites – or simply people vs. politicians.' He suggested in our anti-political age people see politicians, not as 'ours' and 'theirs', or a Labour vs. Tory politician, but rather as a category in and of themselves: 'Moreover a category who look after themselves to our detriment,' he added.

Reicher said: 'That, of course, is what the expenses scandal was all about. It lies behind the rise of left and right populisms throughout the world – from Donald Trump to Syriza to Podemos to the Front National to Corbyn to UKIP.' Reicher suggested that in this anti-political era many politicians had not yet realised that conventional politics does not work: 'Doing things that might conventionally doom you now doesn't – it might even help you, something Trump mastered to perfection.'

Reicher added that this can all be combined with the issue of prospect theory and the framing of risk. He said: 'We are less likely to risk a major loss to make a gain than to take a risk to avoid a loss. One way that the SNP shifted the debate in Scotland was to move from the risks of leaving the UK to arguing that there were certain dangers of staying in the UK (threats to the Health Service)



and that it was worth taking a punt to avoid these. We see similar framings going on now.'

Neuroscientist and author Dr Dean Burnett (Cardiff University) said that as the campaign drew to a close he expected to see both sides using more personalities and familiar faces as opposed to theoretical arguments and policy positions. He said: 'The Leave campaign in particular may lack any "certainty" on which to pin their case, and people really don't like uncertainty. In contrast, people do respond really well to familiar, confident figures, especially if they do and say things we already agree with, leading to confirmation bias.' As a result, he added, as we approach the vote and the campaigners feel the need to pull out all the stops to win, we would see more of the campaign figureheads such as Boris Johnson for 'Leave' and David Cameron for 'Remain'.

Burnett added wryly: 'When you consider that the future of a continent could be decided by a public slanging match between Johnson and Cameron, the whole "take off and nuke the place from orbit" argument doesn't seem so overzealous after all.'



## EXTREME PORNGRAPHY GUIDELINES

The British Psychological Society's Professional Practice Board has published guidelines for psychologists who may be required to access illegal materials for clinical or research purposes as part of their professional duties.

*Access to Sexually Explicit Illegal Material for the Purpose of Assessment, Intervention and Research* has been produced against a background of technological advances that have radically changed how sexually explicit illegal materials are reproduced and disseminated. The ease of production, lack of expense, and anonymity in obtaining and distributing illegal material has resulted in an exponential increase in the availability, accessibility and volume of sexually explicit material on the internet. Psychologists are now frequently called upon to access illegal and extreme pornographic material when making assessments of clients or in the course of research or clinical work with offenders.

The guidelines set out the legal protections there are for psychologists and others and advise on the circumstances in

which such illegal material may be legally viewed. They also state that the decision whether to view the material 'remains a matter of professional choice for the professional psychologist'.



Dr Gary Macpherson FBPSS who chaired the cross-divisional Illegal Materials Working Party, commented: ...the guidelines should reassure psychologists working in forensic settings who may be instructed to work clinically with persons who have accessed illegal materials or in a research capacity with such materials. Such instructions pose challenges for psychologists. The guidelines seek to protect psychologists whose legitimate duties expose them by necessity to potentially illegal materials.'

**I** The guidelines are available for free download at [www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/Policy/pp6\\_illegal\\_materials\\_web.pdf](http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/Policy/pp6_illegal_materials_web.pdf)

We then spoke, in more depth, to Luciana Carraro from the University of Padova (see the online version for further comments). First, we asked why all campaigns seem to go down a scaremongering/negative route. Do voters like this tactic? 'Actually, when we asked voters (or participants) about the use of negative political campaigns, they usually indicate a negative opinion... they dislike such campaigns because saying something negative about other people is of course perceived as a negative behaviour, an immoral-unfair action. However, despite the awareness of this blatant reaction by voters, politicians seem to use more and more negativity during their campaigns.'

Carraro points to several psychological studies that might explain this discrepancy. 'First of all, the new media used by politicians to communicate to voters require a brief, incisive and sensationalistic communication style. Negative campaigning perfectly meets these criteria and, indeed, although the overall number of negative political messages does not seem to have increased over time, our research suggests that the media coverage of them has substantially

increased. The media talk more about negative campaigns as compared to positive campaigns and, in the end, this may help to promote one specific candidate.'

Carraro's research recently demonstrated that although candidates relying on negative campaigns received less positive evaluations, they were also more likely to be followed. 'In other words, despite an overt disapproval, such candidates seem to be able to increase spontaneous conformity among perceivers because they are perceived as more competent. The use of negative attacks toward the opposing candidate may increase the perceived competence of the source candidate, a crucial dimension in political decision making.'

Is there anything about this particular vote that lends itself to the more negative or fear-based campaign? Carraro points to recent research that has demonstrated how negative information in general (for instance terrorist attacks) may increase the support for conservative points of view and for right-wing candidates. 'In general, people in threatening situations tend to adopt more conservative views as a protection.' **ER**

# Appearance matters

In an image-obsessed world what happens to those struggling with visible differences or fears about their body image? A new two-week training course developed by psychologists could help the next generation of health workers across Europe support patients experiencing these issues.

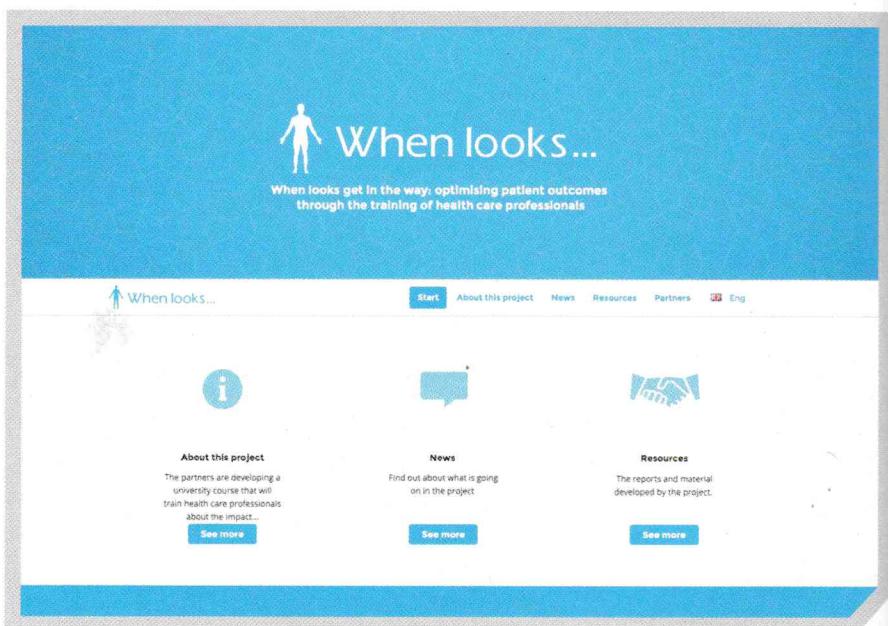
Working with universities across Europe, academics from the Centre for Appearance Research (based at the University of the West of England, Bristol) have created the course for everyone from dentists to plastic surgeons to improve their support for these vulnerable patients in future. The research group believe extra training is paramount because the growing popularity of social media is leaving an increasing number of people with low self-esteem over their looks.

About one in 43 people have a condition or injury affecting their appearance, with between 30 and 50 per cent of those harbouring concerns about their appearance. It is estimated 148 million Europeans have a condition resulting in a visible difference of appearance. Despite these figures academics from the centre identified a dearth of expertise among medics when it came to handling patients worried about their appearance. They said healthcare professionals are often unable to intervene when they should, leading to worsening social and psychological problems for patients including those with an altered appearance caused by health conditions, medical treatments and injuries.

As part of the study, 700 healthcare professionals from five European countries responded to a survey asking whether they had insufficient knowledge to effectively help patients with appearance concerns. Of the respondents, 70 per cent said they would benefit from further training. The internationally-transferable training, expected to be finalised in August, will be run in universities as an accredited course from 2017 but will also be available as an online resource.

The project, named 'When Looks get in the Way: Optimising patient outcomes through the training of health care professionals' ([www.whenlooks.eu](http://www.whenlooks.eu)) received £170,000 in funding from the British Council. Also in the consortium working on the project was the European Cleft Organisation, based in the Netherlands.

Health Psychologist Dr Heidi Williamson, who is working on the two-



year project alongside fellow psychologists Dr Martin Persson, Professor Nichola Rumsey and Professor Diana Harcourt, said: 'We weren't surprised there was a gap in knowledge. We've been working in this field for 20 years and have become aware that healthcare professionals can lack knowledge in this area. If they are not recognising there is a problem and not intervening appropriately, negative social and psychological consequences could develop or worsen if not addressed appropriately.'

Williamson said people working in caring professions may still hold unhelpful attitudes about some patients' appearance and make assumptions about their care based on these. She added: 'We know that the cause of a visible difference, its severity and its location are not always accurate predictors of psychosocial outcome. You can't look at someone and guess what support they need. For example, you could have someone with a small, aesthetically-pleasing cleft scar who is very conscious of it or have someone with a very obvious visible difference who is coping very well.'

Meanwhile, a podcast from psychologists at the CAR has become a mainstay of the iTunes charts, regularly featuring in 'what's hot' and 'top Higher Education podcasts'.

'Appearance Matters' investigates everything related to the psychology of how we look, and Nadia Craddock is leading the work on it. She told *The*

Psychologist: 'It aims to explore the world of appearance research, in a fun and accessible audio format. We introduce new insights and advances in current appearance research and practice, hear from leading experts in the field and discuss top tips for students, trainees and early career researchers who want to make a real impact in this area. The podcast is also a chance for us to highlight upcoming CAR events and opportunities; – recently we have been talking about our forthcoming conference, Appearance Matters 7, taking place in London on 28–30 June.'

A range of clinicians, researchers, charitable organisations and individuals affected by appearance-altering conditions have appeared on the podcast to share their experiences and ideas. Craddock says: 'Our special guests have included: Dr Eric Stice – a leading figure in eating disorder prevention research; Dr Bryn Austin – a Harvard professor specialising in eating disorder prevention as a public health priority; and James Partridge OBE – founder and chief executive of Changing Faces, the leading UK charity supporting and representing people with disfiguring conditions; not to mention our very own CAR Co-Directors, Professors Diana Harcourt and Nichola Rumsey OBE.'

Reviewers have commented on the 'great guest speakers and wide range of topics', and described the podcast as 'relevant to clinicians, researchers, students and charities'. **ER**

# 'Phenomenal response' to dementia gaming app

A groundbreaking new mobile game app could lead to vital advancements in dementia research. 'Sea Hero Quest' focuses on a son's quest to capture the lost memories of his father, and it has been specifically designed to track and help advance our understanding of spatial navigation and how this aspect of our brain works.

Dementia disrupts the formation of new memories, often leaving those affected isolated and disorientated. For many people living with dementia, one of the first effects they experience is a loss of spatial awareness, as they lose the ability to navigate their way through even well-

known places and environments.

The game has been developed as part of an innovative collaboration between academics from University College London, the University of East Anglia and the University of Northumbria, on behalf of telecommunication company Deutsche Telekom, Alzheimer's Research UK and game developers Glitchers.

Dr Hugo Spiers (UCL) and Professor Michael Hornberger (UEA) said: 'This project provides an unprecedented chance to study how many thousands of people from different countries and cultures navigate space. This

will help shed light on how we use our brain to navigate and aid in future work on diagnostics and drug treatment programmes in dementia research.

Until now, the largest spatial navigation study comprised less than 600 volunteers. Generating an open source dataset of this nature and on this scale, at this pace, is precisely what is needed to bring us closer to unlocking the next breakthrough in dementia research.'

The project aimed to secure 100,000 downloads within six months of becoming available, a target that should generate data that would take more than 50 years to collect using

traditional research. However, the target was surpassed within a day of launch. Key to that was getting PewDiePie, a Swedish web-based comedian and video producer, to promote it. 'He has 43 million subscribers who play videogames,' Dr Spiers noted.

Dr Spiers added: 'The response in just a few days has been phenomenal and goes to show how much can be achieved with brave and diverse collaborations.'

Together, we have created something really special, the impact of which could be truly game changing.' JS

More information and download links at [www.seaheroquest.com](http://www.seaheroquest.com)

## NEW BRAIN RECOVERY CENTRE

A man who suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI) following a one-punch attack has opened a community centre in Hull for others in the same position and their families. With the support of a consultant clinical neuropsychologist and the specialist rehabilitation service at Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals Trust, Paul Spence now hopes to give support through motivational talks and sessions on coping strategies, nutrition and wellbeing.

Paul Spence also works as an ambassador for Hudgell Solicitors, which specialises in medical negligence claims and specifically brain injury and rehabilitation, and suffered his own injury in 2012. He has worked mentoring some of the solicitors' clients and wanted to extend this work into the broader community.

He said: 'Nothing could prepare me or my family for the battle of brain recovery and the difficulties it brought. We've really tried to focus the new centre on providing the kind of support we felt was lacking in communities when people leave hospital and start trying to rebuild their lives.'

The PAUL (Positivity, Awareness, Understanding, Love) For Brain Recovery Centre was set up with the advice of Dr Selen Osman, who is a consultant clinical neuropsychologist working within the specialist rehabilitation service at Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals Trust. She spoke to *The Psychologist* about the



importance of support for patients with acquired brain injuries.

Dr Osman said: 'It is essential that people with acquired brain injuries and their families are provided with ongoing support after leaving hospital, as the effects of such injuries are often lifelong and can be devastating. Paul Spence has succeeded in setting up a centre that fills a large gap in community support services for people with brain injuries within Hull and the surrounding areas, and will provide an invaluable resource to anyone that feels they need information, guidance or general support when navigating the day to day challenges that often occur when adjusting to life after a brain injury.' ER

# First wave of new projects for CREST

Ten projects to address some of the security threats facing the UK have been announced by the Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST), which is led by Lancaster University. The call, offering £1.25 million, was the first round of commissioning by CREST for programmes of syntheses and original research for understanding, mitigating and countering threats to national and international security.

CREST has been funded for three years with £4.35 million from the UK security and intelligence agencies and a further £2.2 million invested by the founding institutions. We spoke to researchers leading two of these projects, which were chosen from 136 applications.

Professor Par Anders Granhag and Karl Ask (University of Gothenburg) have been given funding to evaluate the role of ostracism based on his previous research into the Scharff technique of interrogation. Hanns Scharff was an interrogator who worked during World War II at the Luftwaffe's Intelligence and Evaluation Centre, where he interrogated more than 500 American and British fighter pilots.

However Scharff took an 'uncommonly affable' approach to his subjects and has been described as having 'almost psychic' powers in his ability to casually obtain information from his prisoners during normal conversations. In this research Granhag and his team will empirically address whether a brief episode of social rejection just before an interview increases

individuals' willingness to share information with the interviewer.

Granhag explained: 'Even minimal signs of social exclusion have a large influence on human behaviour because ostracism threatens four very fundamental human needs – belonging, self-esteem, control, and recognition/meaningful existence. When this happens, an individual will feel, think and act in ways to mitigate that threat. One way they can do that is by acting to restore belonging and self-esteem, and this is what we will examine in our experiments. If this approach is empirically supported, then it will be reasonably easy to implement in intelligence-gathering settings.'

Dr Paul Gill who works within UCL's Department of Security and Crime Sciences is looking into terrorists' decision making in terms of security and risk, a project that will involve three main strands. He and his team will carry out a systematic review of criminological literature concerning factors that emerge when a criminal is thinking about committing a crime at a certain place and a certain time.

Gill explained he would collate and review the existing evidence and apply those insights to two unique datasets for the second and third parts of the project. One of these datasets outlines thousands of threats that have been made to the royal family and other high-profile individuals. The second dataset is a collection of terrorist autobiographies.

He added: 'We want to turn qualitative

information into a quantitative dataset to get an understanding of how these individuals, in their own words, made decisions regarding risk and whether and how to conduct terrorist attacks. This work will improve the amount of literature on this subject that's out there. It should be interesting to people tasked with the disruption, detection and investigation of extremist behaviour, policing security and intelligence agencies in particular.'

CREST Director Professor Paul Taylor (Lancaster University) said the standard of applications they received was excellent; not all of these involved psychology, and ranged from art projects to computing proposals. Taylor, who chaired the panel that reviewed these applications, commented: 'It was a privilege to read these proposals, and I am very grateful to the research community for being so supportive of the selection process. We had 428 reviews completed within a three-week period.'

The 10 projects will start between now and September 2016. Taylor added that there will be CREST calls to come: 'We will be doing other calls towards the end of this year, but these will be around more specific topics which have been identified as important. There's over 100 full- and part-time staff working on CREST now, and they include a number of UK-based psychologists. It demonstrates the quality of UK psychology in the forensic area, we know it's world-leading but it's nice to see it on paper.' **ER**

## Epilepsy award

Sophie Bennett, a clinical psychologist at Great Ormond Street Hospital, has won the Discovery Award at the fourth Young Epilepsy Champions Awards. The prize recognises significant research or breakthroughs that have led to new thinking or practice that could make a difference to children and young people with the condition.

Dr Bennett, who is also undertaking her PhD at UCL Institute of Child Health in the Population, Policy and Practice Programme, aims to

improve the mental health and psychological wellbeing of children with epilepsy through her work. She recently published the only review of psychological treatments in children with long-term medical conditions, including epilepsy.

She has developed a new way of screening patients to better understand their psychological needs and how to treat them accordingly. She said: 'It feels amazing to be



recognised with the Discovery Award. The families we work with are so inspirational and it's really nice that we can do something for them. The work I do is part of a team at the

Institute of Child Health, and we know young people with epilepsy often have other difficulties apart from seizures, they may have problems with emotion or behaviour, we hope to find treatments that work so that we can support them.'

Now in its fourth year, the Young Epilepsy Champions Awards, this year held at London's UnderGlobe, celebrate the achievements of those living with epilepsy, their families, carers, teachers and support networks.



## Helping the police with their inquiries

A psychologist and her team of student sleuths have been assisting police in trawling archives for information on a 42-year-old murder investigation. Dr Penny Woolnough (Abertay University), who has worked with police for 14 years specialising in missing people,

organised for the 12 forensic psychology students to get involved.

Norfolk Constabulary and Police Scotland asked for help in finding information on the unidentified headless body of a woman that was found in Norfolk in 1974. The badly decomposed body had been

found wrapped in a plastic sheet and clothed in a pink Marks & Spencer's nightdress.

Thanks to forensic evidence police found that the string binding her hands was manufactured in Dundee, and nowhere else in the world. Students involved in the case, known as Operation Monton, spent weeks trawling through daily newspaper articles to find reports of missing women in the area creating information logs of any useful pieces of information, which were passed on to police.

Dr Woolnough was approached by a Dundee police officer for help in compiling evidence in this case, she said she was keen to have the third- and fourth-year forensic psychology students see what real investigative work required.

She said: 'The students have been raking through newspapers dating back to

1973 and '75 to identify who was reported in the papers as missing around that time or other potentially interesting pieces of information police could follow up on. Students were given three months' worth of daily newspapers to read through and they had to be very meticulous.'

She added that while many students have a media-fuelled view of what it is to do investigative work, she wanted them to understand that investigations are thorough and steady processes that can often be a little boring. Woolnough said she hoped students could be involved in projects like this in the future: 'Police in Norfolk and Scotland are now going through the students' evidence to see if any of it could be used and whether it has value for further investigation. We're just waiting to see if anything came out of this that could help solve the mystery.' **ER**

## Medical Professional Insurance Policies



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# What crisis? – the reproducibility crisis

A huge audience of psychologists, students and researchers was drawn to the British Psychological Society debate in London about the reproducibility and replication crisis in psychology. After Brian Nosek and the Open Science Collaboration outlined the difficulty in reproducing psychological findings, the BPS, the Experimental Psychology Society and the Association of Heads of Psychology Departments hoped to host an upbeat and positive debate in the area.

Chair of the BPS Research Board Daryl O'Connor (Leeds University) said Nosek's paper, which highlighted issues in psychology's methodology and statistical approaches, had provided the field with a huge opportunity. He added: 'The publication of that paper is revolutionary for our discipline, it provides an opportunity to propel us forward, improve our scientific practice and research methods.'

Many of the publishing models used in psychology, pointed out the day's first speaker Marcus Munafò (University of

Bristol), were developed 400 years ago. Could the crisis in psychology be less of a crisis and more of an opportunity to change? he asked. The findings of Nosek's work, he said, were not surprising to many, as the lack of replicability in psychology has been recognised for years.

He suggested these issues around reproducibility capture how humans respond to incentives and aspects of their environment that shape their behaviour as well as reflecting cognitive biases people hold. There are also methodological issues within this crisis: Joshua Carp carried out a systematic review of around 240 fMRI studies and found much methodological data missing that would be required to attempt a replication, and almost no two studies analysed their data in the same way.

Munafò said one main issue was named the 'garden of forking paths' – where researchers start with data and are encouraged to explore it rather than sticking to an original plan of analysis. But after several analyses are carried out, when scientists find that prized *p*-value less than .05, it may not mean what they think it means.

So psychology researchers tend to retrofit hypotheses to data, and a culture has been created whereby researchers feel a need to have a narrative in their papers. Munafò said the incentive structures around publishing – some researchers rely on grants for their full income, for example – leads to biases almost inevitably.

These biases have been shown in the literature: for example, people invested in a certain area are likely to think a meta-analysis in their field supports their position compared to outside observers with no 'skin in the game'. There is also a great deal of distortion in citations, with null results receiving few citations despite their importance.

But despite this Munafò ended on something of a high note. He said the replication crisis in psychology has led to the realisation that a shift in focus is needed from

productivity to more quality control. He added: 'Part of the opportunity is to refresh the way we do science. Like using pre-registration, open access, curating data, these all act as quality-control procedures. The solutions will come about by applying scientific methods to the process of science itself.'

A key issue in psychology's failure to reproduce results, Dorothy Bishop (University of Oxford) said, was the lack of distinction in the published literature between hypothesis-testing results in contrast to exploratory statistical findings. She said although this problem had been recognised for many years, psychologists had sometimes been actively discouraged from taking this on board.

This problem, she said, was pointed out by Dutchman DeGroot, whose work has only recently been translated. He pointed out that exploring a dataset and looking at the numbers then deciding how to analyse them, 'precludes the interpretability of statistical tests' or in other words researchers should not be using *p*-values in this exploratory work.

Bishop gave a hypothetical example – if someone carried out analysis between an ADHD and typical group and found no statistical significance, they may then divide the sample into young and old groups instead. However, if they consequently found a statistically significant *p*-value it would not mean much. She said it was always important to consider the context in which a *p*-value is found rather than its significance alone.

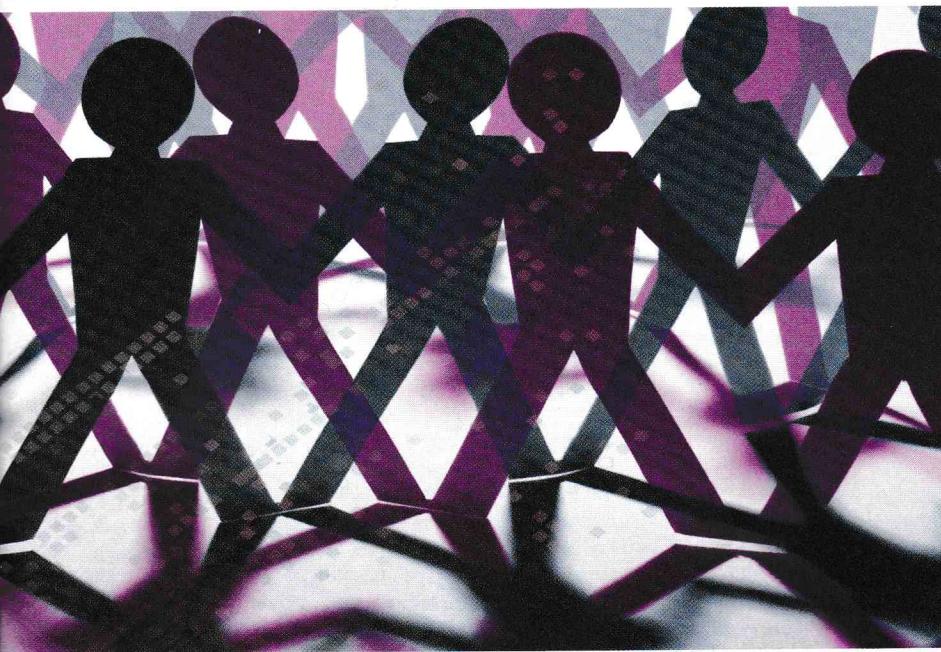
She also alluded to the 'garden of forking paths' metaphor, saying: 'When I get to the end of a forking path the chances of getting a significant result is much higher. We have a good chance of finding something that's not true but looks convincing.' Although many researchers may think it is right to explore data in this way, it is actually a convoluted way of misleading oneself.

Bishop said using random datasets demonstrated this well, and could be used



Dorothy Bishop





with students to illustrate this problem. We see many 'significant' correlations between two random datasets, when carrying out multiple correlations one is likely to come up at the  $< 0.05$  level. It was important, Bishop said, to overcome our bias towards over-interpreting observed patterns.

She pointed to some possible solutions for avoiding this sort of research methodology; for example, encouraging students to play around with random numbers to see the potential for false positives, distinguishing between hypothesis testing and exploratory statistics and in publishing more replications.

Bishop also suggested institutions could play a role in helping psychology research by, for example, changing incentive structures and moving the focus away from impact factors of journals, potentially by rewarding those who carry out reproducible research and carry out open science practices. She concluded by saying that psychologists were not natural scientists, and so it was far too easy for them to fool themselves.

Chris Chambers (Cardiff University) spoke about his work encouraging journals to take up a pre-registration approach to publishing. This allows researchers to submit the idea for their research, including a detailed methodology, to a journal to be approved for publication prior to carrying out their research.

This ensures they stick to the analyses set out at the outset and sees null results have better chance of publication than in 'traditional' journals. Another innovative feature of such articles is results from exploratory statistics can be presented but must be labelled as such. Chambers said he wanted to move emphasis from the

importance of results on to the processes that produce them.

International civil-servant-turned-psychology-PhD-candidate Nick Brown (University of Groningen) provided the audience with a wry, sort-of-outsider's take on the problems within psychology. Among his achievements Brown has translated from Dutch the confessional autobiography of psychological fraudster Diederik Stapel (see [tinyurl.com/z5jysuu](http://tinyurl.com/z5jysuu) for a free download of the translation), who has had scores of papers retracted after fabricating data.

Brown pointed out there were some general incentive problems and enablers of bad science dotted throughout all areas of science. He said publication bias, the 'lottery' of peer review, journals chasing impact factor and an 'article publication commune' where some authors will automatically add colleagues' names to their papers and vice versa, were just some of these.

However, psychology has some very specific problems. People love stories about themselves, and the popular media love to report them; the constructs psychologists measure, he said, were not externally verifiable and rested on little solid theory. 'Psychologists run a mile in the face of statistics, most don't know how to interpret *p*-values correctly and many psychologists see numbers as a necessary evil,' he added.

The consequences of bad incentives in psychology, Brown said, were HARKING (hypothesising after results are known), false positives or type 1 error, questionable research practices and outright fraud. Type 1 errors are not a career-limiting issue in psychology: findings are not taken straight out into the field and used to fly a plane, for example. Brown added: 'We know it's

important, a brick in the wall, but it doesn't matter if we get it wrong. And while replication is unlikely, no one will discover your type 1 error.'

He said there was also a lack of disincentives for using questionable research practices – some are even asked for during the review process, and a majority of psychologists admit to using them. Although it is impossible to estimate how prevalent outright fraud is within the field, some put it at 5 per cent; Brown suggested it is likely to be more as only the most incompetent fraudsters are caught.

He also pointed to work by Brown and Heathers who looked at the summary statistics in 71 papers; 36 of these had errors, and the authors contacted the researchers to ask for their raw data, but few would provide it. Brown said: 'Maybe the reason we can't reproduce is because results were reported incorrectly or made up. The most common response to asking for raw data is silence.'

Finally Prateek Buch, a Policy Associate for Sense About Science, gave a fascinating talk about the group's work looking at government-funded research. He said transparency in science was vital, and not only in psychology, but applied particularly in policy making.

The government, he said, generates much research evidence, through the civil service or commissioning outside experts, which is designed to eventually inform public policy. Sense About Science began to wonder how transparent it was in its own research.

However, upon asking the government how many studies it had commissioned or that had been published, they were told the government did not know. This is despite the fact that it spends around £2.5 billion per year on in-house or commissioned research.

Sense About Science launched an inquiry into the delayed publication of government-commissioned research, led by Sir Stephen Sedley. In short, it found chaos at the heart of how the government conducts research. One source of delayed publication is the pressure put on government to align the publication of policy research with policy announcements.

Buch said that while the government was using so much research evidence to make policy, this research needed to be transparent. He said: 'The discussion around a need for greater transparency strikes me as a nice headache to have. At least you're able to estimate the nature of the problem in psychology. In policy they can't even make a reliable, quantitative estimate of how much research is missing.' **ER**

# Classic finding about babies' imitation skills is probably wrong

Pick up any introductory psychology textbook and under the 'developmental' chapter you're bound to find a description of 'groundbreaking' research into newborn babies' imitation skills. The work, conducted by Meltzoff and Moore in the 1970s, will typically be shown alongside black-and-white images of a man sticking his tongue out at a baby, and the tiny baby duly sticking out her tongue in response.

The research was revolutionary because it appeared to show that humans are born with the power to imitate – a skill crucial to learning and relationships – and it contradicted the claims of Jean Piaget, the grandfather of developmental psychology, that imitation does not emerge until babies are around nine months old.

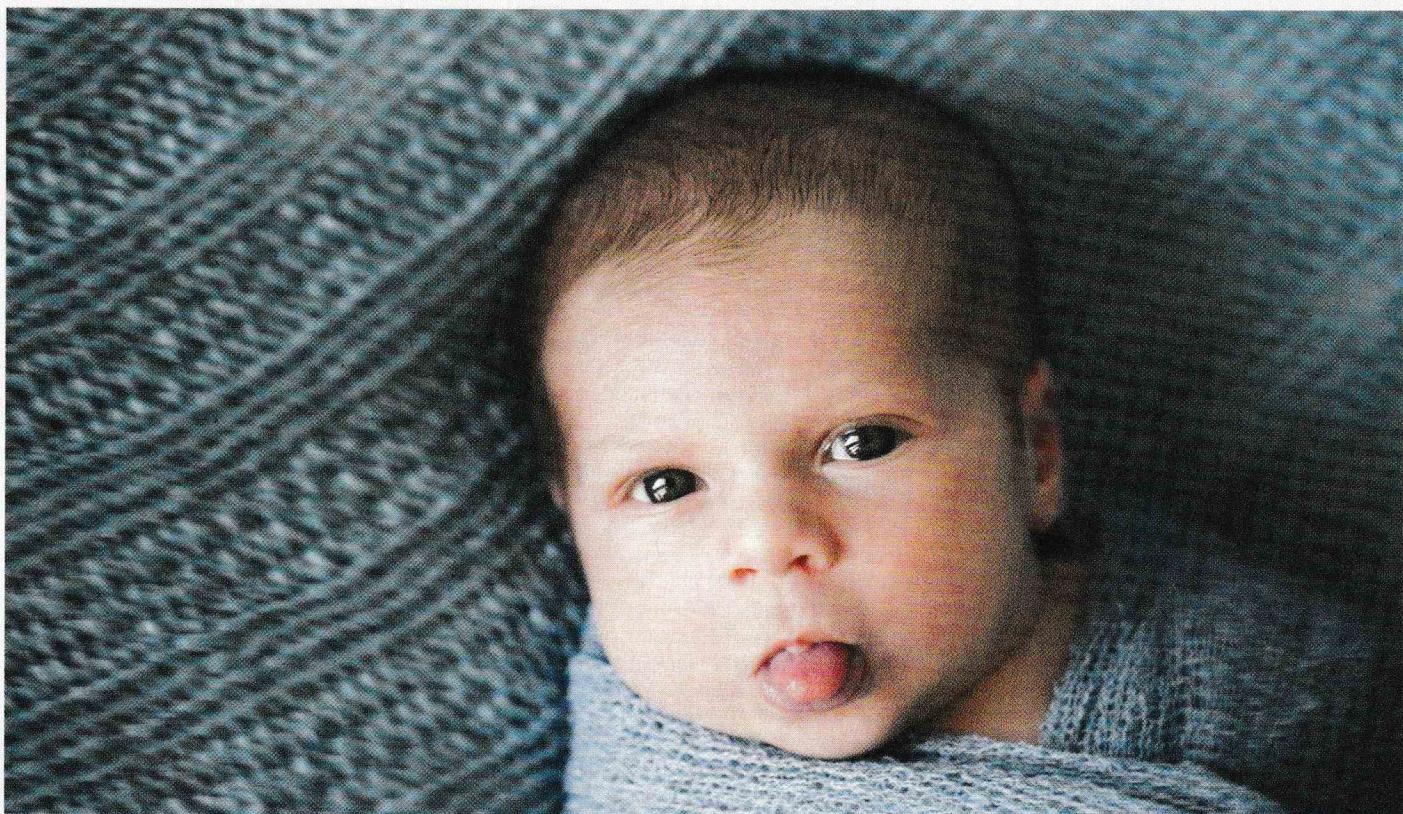
Today it may be time to rewrite these textbooks. A new study in *Current Biology*, more methodologically rigorous than any previous investigation of its kind, has found no evidence to support the idea that newborn babies can imitate.

Janine Oostenbroek and her colleagues tested 106 infants four times: at one week of age, then at three weeks, six weeks, and nine weeks. Data from 64 of the infants was available at all four time points. At each test, the researcher performed a range of facial movements, actions or sounds for 60 seconds each. There were 11 of these displays in total, including tongue protrusions, mouth opening, happy face, sad face, index finger pointing and *mmm* and *eee* sounds. Each baby's behaviour during these 60-second periods was filmed and later coded according to which faces, actions or sounds, if any, he or she performed during the different researcher displays.

Whereas many previous studies have compared babies' responses to only two or a few different adult displays, this study was much more robust because the researchers checked to see if, for example, the babies were more likely to stick out their tongues when that's what the researcher was doing, as compared with when the researcher was doing any of the 10 other displays or sounds. Unlike most prior research, this new study also looked to see how any signs of imitation changed over time, at the different testing sessions. According to the researchers, this makes theirs 'the most comprehensive, longitudinal study of neonatal imitation to date'.

Following these more robust standards, Oostenbroek and her team found no evidence that newborn babies can reliably imitate faces, actions or sounds. Take the example of tongue protrusions. Averaged across the different testing time points, the babies were no more likely to stick out their tongue when the researcher did so, as compared with the researcher opened her mouth, pulled a happy face or pulled a sad face. In fact, across all the different displays, actions and sounds, there was no situation in which the babies consistently performed a given facial display, gesture or sound more when the researcher specifically did that same thing, than when the researcher was doing anything else.

Based on their results, the researchers said that the idea of 'innate imitation modules' and other such concepts founded on the ideal of neonatal imitation 'should be modified or abandoned altogether'. They said the truth may be closer to what Piaget originally proposed and that imitation probably emerges from around six months. CJ



In *Current Biology*

## Your pilot's decisions are probably as irrational as yours and mine

In *Applied Cognitive Psychology*

Flying a plane is no trivial task, but adverse weather conditions are where things get seriously challenging. Tragically, a contributing factor to many fatal accidents is when the pilot has misjudged the appropriateness of the flying conditions. Now in a somewhat worrying paper in *Applied Cognitive Psychology* Stephen Walmsley and Andrew Gilbey of Massey University have shown that pilots' judgement of weather conditions, and their decisions on how to respond to them, are coloured by three classic cognitive biases. What's more, expert flyers are often the most vulnerable to these mental errors.

The researchers first addressed the 'anchoring effect', which is when information we receive early on has an undue influence on how we subsequently think about a situation. Nearly 200 pilots (a mix of commercial, transport, student and private pilots) were given the weather forecast for the day and then they looked at visual displays that showed cloud cover and horizontal visibility as if they were in a cockpit, and their task was to quantify these conditions by eye.

The pilots tended to rate the atmospheric conditions as better – higher clouds, greater visibility – when they'd been told earlier that the weather forecast was favourable. Essentially, old and possibly irrelevant information was biasing the judgement they were making with their own eyes. Within the sample were 56 experts with over 1000 hours of experience, and these pilots were especially prone to being influenced by the earlier weather forecast.

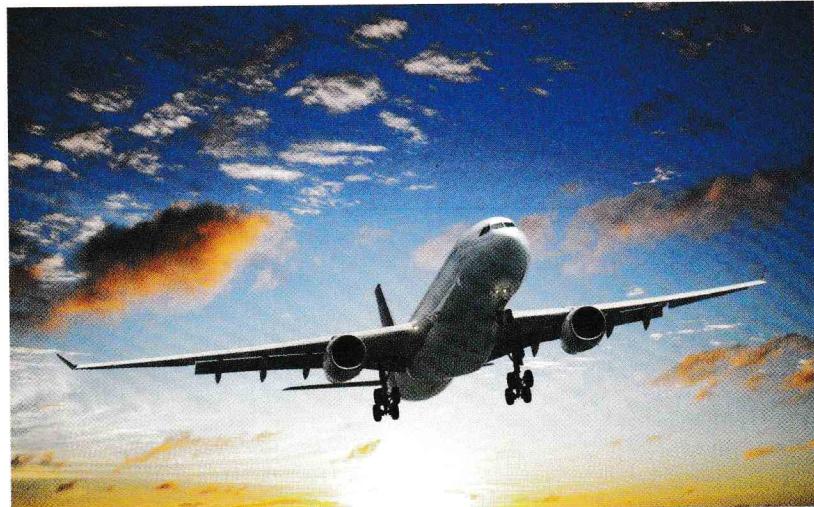
Next, hundreds more pilots read about scenarios where a pilot needed to make an unplanned landing. An airstrip was nearby, but the conditions for the route were uncertain. Each participant had to solve five of these landing dilemmas, deciding whether to head for the strip or re-route. For each

scenario they were told two statements that were reassuring for heading for the strip (e.g. another pilot had flown the route minutes ago) and one that was problematic (e.g. the visibility was very low). In each case, the participants had to say which piece of information was most important for deciding whether to land at the nearby airstrip or not.

Across the scenarios, the participants showed no real preference for one type of statement over another. This might sound sensible, but actually it's problematic. When you want to test a hypothesis, like 'it seems safe to land', you should seek out information that disproves your theory. (No matter how many security guards, alarms and safety certificates a building possesses, if it's on fire, you don't go in.) So pilots should be prioritising the disconfirming evidence over the others, but in fact they were just as likely to rely on reassuring evidence, which is an example of what's known as 'the confirmation bias'.

In a final experiment more pilot volunteers read decisions that other pilots had made about whether to fly or not and the information they'd used to make their decisions. Sometimes the flights turned out to be uneventful, but other times they resulted in a terrible crash. Even though the pilots in the different scenarios always made their decisions based on the exact same pre-flight information, the participants tended to rate their decision making much more harshly when the flight ended in disaster than when all went well.

It concerns Walmsley and Gilbey that pilots are vulnerable to this error – an example of the 'outcome bias' – because pilots who decide to fly in unwise



weather and get lucky could be led by this bias to see their decisions as wise, and increasingly discount the risk involved. Note that both the confirmation and outcome experiments also contained an expert subgroup, and in neither case did they make better decisions than other pilots.

The use of cognitive heuristics and shortcuts – 'thinking fast' in Daniel Kahneman's memorable phrase – is enormously useful, necessary for helping

us surmount the complexities of the world day-to-day. But when the stakes are high, whether it be aviation or areas such as medicine, these tendencies need to be countered. Simply raising awareness that these biases afflict professionals may be one part of the solution. Another may be introducing work processes that encourage slower, more deliberative reasoning. That way, when pilots scan the skies, they might be more likely to see the clouds on the horizon. AF

## After learning to identify with someone else's face, do people think their appearance has changed?

In *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*

Past research has shown that it's possible to hack our sense of our own bodies in bewildering ways, such as perceiving another person's face as our own by stroking both in synchrony. These body illusions can alter our sense of self at a psychological level too. For example, embodying a child-sized body in a virtual-reality environment leads people to associate themselves with childlike concepts. Can such effects also operate in the opposite direction, from the psychological to the physical? A new paper published in the *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* aimed to find out by seeing if shifting people's sense of self at a psychological level warped their sense of their facial appearance.

Sophie Payne's team at Royal Holloway, University of London manipulated their participants' sense of self by repeatedly presenting them with a black-and-white cropped photo of a gender-appropriate face that was labelled 'self', and with two other face images that were labelled as 'friend' and 'stranger'. To consolidate these associations, the researchers then tested the participants, repeatedly showing them one of the earlier faces together with the correct label used earlier or the wrong label, and the participants had to say each time whether the label matched the face or not.

As the test went on, the participants became especially quick at spotting when the 'self face' was correctly labelled as 'self', just as the researchers hoped would happen. This suggests that the

previously unknown face had been incorporated into their self-concept, at least temporarily. Think of it as a weaker version of the way we are particularly sensitive to any sounds that resemble our name, even against the hubbub of a cocktail party.

Having incorporated this face into their self-concept, did the participants view their facial appearance any differently? To address this, the researchers presented the participants with 100 faces and asked them to rate how similar each face was to their own. Fifty of the faces were blends of their own real face with the 'stranger' face from earlier, and another 50 blended their real face with the 'self face' paired earlier with their self-concept.

The participants had actually completed this resemblance task earlier, before they had learned to associate the 'self face' with their self-concept. The crucial test was whether, now that they had learned to associate themselves with the 'self face', they would see themselves as resembling that face physically, more so than they had done earlier. Payne's team predicted that they would, but in fact the results showed that this hadn't happened. Identifying themselves with the face hadn't made them believe that they looked like the face.

Payne's prediction was credible partly because we know the psychological self is malleable, body perception is malleable, and changes to body perception usually result in shifts in sense of self. Furthermore, and making this new result extra surprising, psychological influences have already been shown to affect our judgements about the physical appearance of our own face.

For example, a study from 2014 showed that people were more likely to say that they resembled a face that reflected a blend of their own face with someone else's, when that other face belonged to a trustworthy partner in an earlier trading task rather than a cheat. Essentially, that result showed that the lines between self and other can be easily blurred, unlike in the current study. What gives?

The non-significant result in the current study may have uncovered the limits to these kinds of blurring effects. The findings suggest that it may be quite easy to adapt our self-concept, for example attuning us to identify with a new nickname or onscreen avatar, but that for this process to go deeper and influence how we perceive our own physical appearance, we need a more motivated, involving, and perhaps social context, like being betrayed or treated loyalty.

The new hypothesis, then, is that we are engineered to perceptually link – or distance ourselves – from those who have helped or wronged us, and that the heat of social emotion is the soldering iron that fixes these connections fast. Further research will tell. **AF**

The material in this section is taken from the Society's **Research Digest** blog at [www.bps.org.uk/digest](http://www.bps.org.uk/digest), and is written by its editor Dr Christian Jarrett and contributor Dr Alex Fradera.

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## A preliminary psychology of binge TV watching

In *Journal of Health Psychology*

A new study in the *Journal of Health Psychology* is the first to provide a scholarly definition of binge TV watching and to investigate some of the factors that explain how much people indulge in it.

According to Emily Walton-Pattison at Newcastle University and her colleagues, binge TV watching is when you 'watch more than two episodes of the same TV show in one sitting' – a habit that has become more frequent since the popularity of DVD box sets and streaming TV services.

I have fond memories of my own first binge TV session: watching 24 with my wife in a holiday cottage in the Lake District, a crackling fire in the background, snow falling outside. Bliss. But the researchers see things differently: binge TV watching contributes to sedentary behaviour, increases risk of obesity and interferes with healthy sleep habits.

They surveyed 86 people (recruited via social media) about their binge TV watching habits and various psychological constructs, such as whether they expected to experience regret after a binge session. Based on the researchers' definition, the participants had

binge-watched an average of 1.42 times in the past week, taking in an average of 2.94 episodes in 2.51 hours. BBC iPlayer and Netflix were the most popular means of bingeing.

A quarter of the difference in how much people binged was explained by their intentions to binge and expectations that it would be a rewarding, fun thing to do. Other factors that were also relevant included experiences of automaticity ('I did it without thinking') and anticipated regret and goal conflict (seeing bingeing as interfering with other activities) – both of which were associated with less bingeing.

The researchers said that 'further more in-depth and rigorous research into being watching is warranted' but that their preliminary findings already offer hints as to how to curtail people's binge watching habits. For example, they said that TV streaming services could be adapted to counter the mindless aspect of bingeing. 'Some online streaming services include in-built interruptions after a number of consecutive episodes have been reached. There would be opportunities to harness these interruptions,' they said. **CJ**

## Why organisations should encourage their staff to become friends

In *Personnel Psychology*

They say you should never mix business and pleasure, but in reality many of us find that we become friends with the people who we work with. No wonder, when you consider the hours spent together and the deep bonds formed through collaboration and sharing the highs and lows of the job.

A new study in *Personnel Psychology* is among the first to examine the effects on job performance of having more 'multiplex relationships' – colleagues you work with directly who are also your friends outside of work. The researchers say these relationships are 'a mixed blessing', but on balance they found that the more of them people had, the better their work performance as judged by their supervisors.

Jessica Methot and her colleagues first surveyed 301 staff at a large insurance company in southeastern United States. These staff, who had varied roles across the firm, provided a list of 10 colleagues they worked with closely in pursuit of their responsibilities and 10 staff who they considered to be friends and who they socialised with outside of work. The more overlap there was between a person's two lists, the more multiplex relationships they had. The participants also completed measures of emotional exhaustion and work-related positive emotions. Four weeks later, the participants' supervisors were contacted and rated the participants' job performance.

The more multiplex relationships that participants had, the better their job performance. What's more, this was explained in part by the fact that such relationships were associated with experiencing more positive work-related emotions, like feeling excited and proud. In short, being friends with more of their colleagues appeared to be good for staff and for their employer.

However, the picture gets a little more complicated because the researchers dug deeper and found that multiplex relationships were also associated with more emotional exhaustion – presumably because of the effort involved in maintaining more complex relationships and of providing support to friends. In turn, emotional exhaustion was related to poorer work performance, hence the researchers describing workplace friendships as a mixed blessing. Overall though, the benefits to work performance outweighed the costs.

The second study was similar but involved 182 workers at three shops and six restaurants. This time the participants also completed measures of the emotional support, trust, felt obligation and



'maintenance difficulty' (the effort of sustaining and juggling relationships) experienced in their work relationships. The results were similar, with more multiplex relationships again correlating with superior work performance – and this time the association was explained in part by feelings of greater trust towards colleagues who are also friends. But once more, although the overall association was positive, there were signs that these relationships can be a mixed blessing – the more multiplex relationships a person had, the more they tended to report having difficulties maintaining their relationships, which in turn was related to poorer job performance.

We need to be aware that these studies

were correlational so they haven't demonstrated that work friendships causes better job performance, although that is certainly a plausible interpretation, especially in light of the mediating factors that the researchers identified. Given that having more friends at work appears to be beneficial overall, Methot and her colleagues recommended that 'organisations should focus on practices that promote friendship among coworkers who can interact for work-related purposes' such as introducing friendly competition between staff, or implementing social intranet systems 'that simultaneously allow employees to collaborate and share task information while getting to know each other on a social level'. CJ

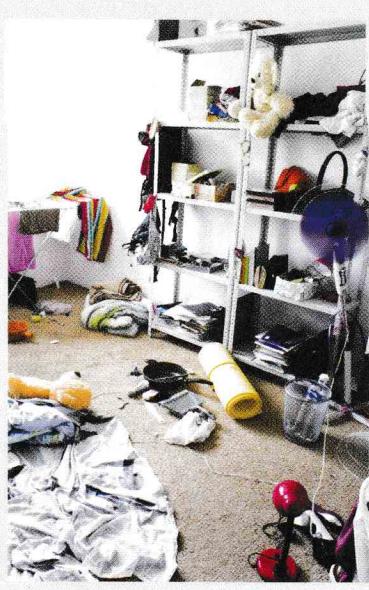
## DIGEST DIGESTED

Full reports are available at [www.bps.org.uk/digest](http://www.bps.org.uk/digest)

Jacob Lomranz and Yael Benyamin, a pair of researchers in Israel, point out that some of us are better than others at coping with incongruence and doubt than others – an ability they call ‘aintegration’ for which they’ve concocted a new questionnaire. The full version, together with background theory, is published in the *Journal of Adult Development*.

Stories can change how we think about the world, about the people they describe, and even ourselves. According to new research, they also influence our attitude to the storyteller. An article published in the journal *Personal Relationships* suggests that people portrayed as stronger storytellers are considered as higher status than those that aren’t – and this status can make them more romantically attractive, at least in the eyes of women.

Why do many people dislike the word ‘moist’? A *New Yorker* social media campaign asking people what word should be deleted from the English language found that the ‘runaway un-favourite’ was ‘moist’. Now, in a *PLoS One* study ‘A moist crevice for word aversion’, psychologist Paul H. Thibodeau from Oberlin College asked hundreds of volunteers recruited online in the US to rate how aversive they found various words, including moist. Verifying the results of the *New Yorker* campaign, he found 20 per cent of them disliked this specific word. Thibodeau tested several potential explanations for this, including that the word is aversive because it brings to mind unsavoury associations. In support of this, Thibodeau found that people who were averse to the word ‘moist’ also tended to be averse to bodily function words like ‘phlegm’ or ‘puke’.



A new study in the *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, ‘The dark side of home’, has warned that ‘Clutter is often an insidious and seemingly harmless outgrowth of people’s natural desire to appropriate their personal spaces with possessions that reflect self-identity and remind them of important people, places, and experiences in their lives. However, when clutter becomes excessive, it can threaten to physically and psychologically entrap a person in dysfunctional home environments which contribute to personal distress and feelings of displacement and alienation.’



## A laughing crowd changes the way your brain processes insults

In *Social Neuroscience*

We usually think of laughter as a sound of joy and mirth, but in certain contexts, such as when it accompanies an insult, it takes on a negative meaning, signalling contempt and derision, especially in a group situation. Most of us probably know from experience that this makes insults sting more, now a study in *Social Neuroscience* has shown the neural correlates of this effect. Within a fraction of a second, the presence of a laughing crowd changes the way that the brain processes an insult.

Marte Otten and her colleagues asked 46 participants to read 60 insults and 60 compliments presented onscreen one word at a time. Half these insults (e.g. ‘You are antisocial and annoying’) and compliments (e.g. ‘You are strong and independent’) featured the silhouette of a crowd of people at the bottom of each screen, and the end of the insult or compliment was followed immediately by a final screen showing the phrase ‘and they feel the same way’ together with the sound of laughter lasting two seconds. Throughout this entire process, the researchers recorded the participants’ brainwaves using EEG.

Otten’s team were particularly interested in the N400 – a negative spike of brain activity that tends to be larger when people hear something unexpected or incongruent with the context – and in the so-called ‘Late Positive Potential (LPP)’ which is a positive spike of brain activity that can occur 300ms to 1 second after a stimulus and is usually taken as a sign of emotional processing.

The participants’ brains appeared to register the difference between insults and compliments very quickly. Within 300 to 400ms after the

onset of the first insulting or complimentary word, the participants’ showed a larger LPP in response to insults, and a more widespread N400.

Moreover, when there was the sound of laughter, the size of the LPP was even greater in the insults condition, whereas the compliments condition was unchanged. In other words, insults almost immediately prompt more emotional processing in the brain than compliments, and this more intense processing is accentuated rapidly by a public context and the sound of laughter.

The researchers said their findings are ‘highly relevant for research that focuses on negative interpersonal interactions such as bullying, or interpersonal and intergroup conflict.’ They added: ‘While the insulted is still busy reading the unfolding insult, the extra sting of publicity is already encoded and integrated in the brain.’



A problem with interpreting the specifics of the study arises from the way that it combined a visual signal of a public context (the silhouette of a crowd) and the sound of laughter, with the image of the crowd preceding the start of the laughter. This makes it tricky to untangle the effects of a public context from the specific effects of hearing laughter. Indeed, the brainwave data showed that, at a neural level, participants were already responding differently to public insults before they could have registered the sound of the laughter.

This issue aside, the researchers said their findings show that ‘the presence of a laughing crowd...leads to stronger and more elongated emotional processing. In short, it seems that public insults are no laughing matter, at least not for the insulted.’ CJ



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For the full criteria and an application form please contact Carl Bourton at the Society's office [carl.bourton@bps.org.uk](mailto:carl.bourton@bps.org.uk)

**Note:** For the purposes of the bursary scheme, a postdoctoral research/lecturer is defined as a person who is employed at a UK HEI and is within three years of the completion of their doctoral research degree (i.e. PhD) in psychology. Please note that this scheme is for those having completed a research doctoral degree as opposed to a practitioner doctoral degree.

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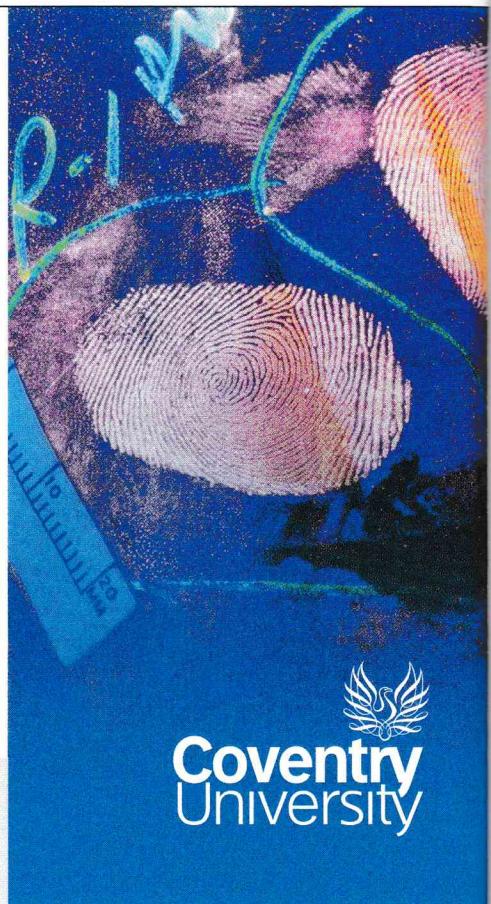
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Nominations should be sent to the Chair of the Professional Practice Board at the Society's office to arrive no later than **Thursday 1 December 2016**.

Full details are available from Carl Bourton at the Society's Leicester office (e-mail: [carl.bourton@bps.org.uk](mailto:carl.bourton@bps.org.uk)).



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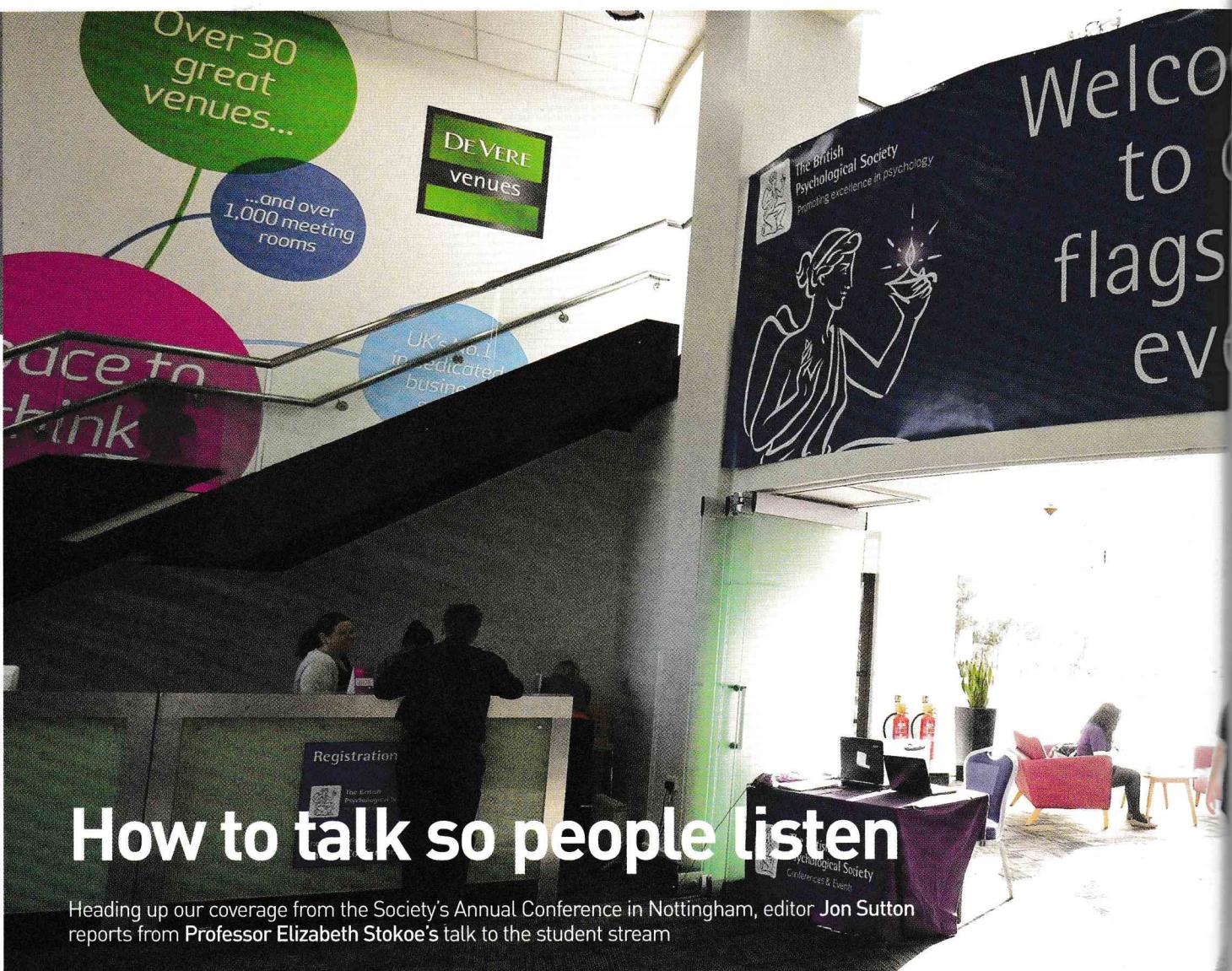
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## How to talk so people listen

Heading up our coverage from the Society's Annual Conference in Nottingham, editor **Jon Sutton** reports from Professor Elizabeth Stokoe's talk to the student stream

Flying the flag for what she called 'faffing around with soggy qualitative psychology', Professor Elizabeth Stokoe (Loughborough University) outlined numerous projects that have analysed talk 'in the wild'. She did a superb job of conveying the thrill of research: 'There's this thing, and it was just lying around in the world before someone bothered to pick it up, now I'm going to look around and see what other examples I can find.'

Professor Stokoe has worked in some fascinating areas, gratifyingly at least in part since a 'Careers' interview in *The Psychologist* [see [www.thepsychologist.org.uk/volume-26/edition-3/talk-slow-motion](http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk/volume-26/edition-3/talk-slow-motion)] led to an appearance on BBC Radio 4's *The Life Scientific*, a TED talk (in Bermuda!), a *Tatler* magazine feature, a WIRED Innovation Fellowship and more. She has discovered that talk in natural, everyday contexts is not as idiosyncratic and messy as we might think it is... we're not as personality or gender driven as we might assume, instead following a typical

route on a 'racetrack' of conversation.

For example, why can we spot a cold caller a mile off? The reciprocal elements of conversation are missing. Professor Stokoe played a cringeworthy example, which went along the lines of 'And how are you today?'; 'Good thanks'; 'Not too bad'. Can you spot the missing element? If you're on the receiving end of a cold call, you know it's coming from a manual. The caller is not entitled to do this little routine which usually denotes friendship and familiarity. What should cold callers do? 'Stop building rapport', Professor Stokoe advised. 'It doesn't work.'

Professor Stokoe also studied calls to community mediation services, from people hoping to resolve neighbour disputes. She became more and more interested in the fact that across 600 calls, only a third of them ended with the person who called agreeing to free mediation. On the 'racetrack', Stokoe noticed that callers always start off by saying 'Somebody else gave me this number'. They don't phone up and say

'Hello, I'd like to make an appointment for mediation please'. 'You are a service that the person didn't want and didn't know about,' Stokoe summarised. Zooming in on the moment where the explanation of mediation happens, she noticed that mediation was being sold as an ideology, an ethos. Callers tended to respond with 'Well, to be quite honest, I don't think she'd cooperate'. 'When you're in a dispute,' Stokoe noted, 'all you really want is for people to agree with you – to say that you're the nice, reasonable one.' If that's not possible, it's better to just explain mediation as a process: 'this happens, and then that happens'. When callers are asked if they would be willing to take that next step, or it is proposed that they are the nice one, caller uptake is strong (the 'more than' response).

Turning to calls to GP receptionists, Stokoe said: 'Almost in the first call we found the main trainable thing that is going wrong.' Too often, the receptionist is 'on that racetrack, she can see the finish line, and the caller is going to have to



drag them back. There's going to be a crash at the end of the call... the patient has to keep themselves in an encounter just so that they can achieve some service.' The more instances there were of patients having to push for things in this way, the lower the score on a GP experience survey. 'These are simple, small things to fix,' Stokoe concluded, 'if you can only find them.'

Analysis of Metropolitan Police recordings of hostage negotiators in the field, trying to stop people committing suicide, completed Stokoe's winding journey. These professionals are very well trained, and amazing at what they do, Stokoe said. Nevertheless, using her Conversation Analytic Role-play Method ([www.carmtraining.org](http://www.carmtraining.org)) she hopes to 'finesse the training'. By going back and thinking in a fine-grained way about what happened and what worked, Stokoe can have real impact in hard areas. Far from soggy, and job done in terms of her stated goal of inspiring those 'treading the non-traditional path'.

**Professor Elizabeth Stokoe is also due to appear for 'The Psychologist presents...' at this July's Latitude Festival in Suffolk. We asked her to tell us more about conversation analysis and its practical uses.**

We live our lives by talking to others. We build, maintain and end our personal and professional relationships. We buy and sell. We get and give help. We are excited, irritated, embarrassed and consoled in response to things others say to us. Yet psychologists have often shied away from studying talk, preferring to ask people to report on their communicative lives in interviews or questionnaires, or to simulate them in laboratories. Psychologists have argued that people's talk is too idiosyncratic or too messy to capture and study systematically. But conversation analysts have shown that talk is, in fact, highly organised.

Conversation analysis involves collecting corpora of tens to thousands of audio or video recordings of talk in the wild. The recordings are transcribed and analysed using a technical system that permits a forensic analysis of the constituent activities that comprise complete interactions. Collectively, conversation analysts have investigated all aspects of social life from first dates to medical consultations and from family mealtimes to cockpit interaction.

### Conversational racetracks

It can be useful to think of a conversation in terms of a racetrack with a distinct landscape. We start at the beginning with our recipient(s) and, along the way, complete projects of various kinds. All

racetracks involve 'openings', 'closings' and projects that progress them in between. Initial enquiries to an unfamiliar organisation might involve an explanation of their service; calling the GP involves requesting an appointment. All of these projects can be done in more than one way. CA focuses on how different project designs lead to different outcomes.

For instance, analysis of a corpus of recorded *first dates* reveals that they comprise the delicate project of asking about previous relationships. Participants do this in one of two ways: asking indirectly with a trail-off 'or' ('So, are you divorced, or...?') or asking directly ('So what's your relationship history then?'). Asking indirectly is more effective – at least if you want to keep the date on course!

### The natural laboratory

It's common to measure communication success *exogenously* by asking people to report how they feel about their encounters. Dates rate their date; customers rate their experience; patients rate their satisfaction. However, conversation analysts establish the effectiveness of communication *endogenously*, inside the natural laboratory that recorded datasets provide. The effectiveness of questions about previous relationships in first dates is assessed by examining what happens after direct (misalignment) and indirect (alignment) questions. In calls from prospective clients of mediation

services, callers are more likely to agree to mediate if the service is explained as a process (e.g., 'Mediation works by ... what happens first is ... and then...') rather than an ethos (e.g., 'We don't take sides', 'mediation is voluntary').

Knowing the right words can tilt conversations towards particular outcomes. Another finding from studying initial enquiries to mediation services shows that reluctant callers reverse

their stance when asked if they would be 'willing' to try it out. While asking if callers are 'interested' in mediation may get some 'yeses', 'willing' gets a much stronger uptake and only 'willing' turns clients around from 'no' to 'yes'.

### From research to training

These research findings underpin a training approach called the Conversation Analytic Role-play Method. The approach presents mediators, doctors, salespeople, police officers – depending on the research setting studied – with a line-by-line transcript of a real encounter, rather than staged, hypothetical ones, allowing them to assess what really happens in their communicative world, practise what they might say next in such a situation, and see what works when completing their particular projects. CARM makes a unique research-based contribution to communication training. By looking under the bonnet at the engine that drives social life, we discover that the answer to the question of *how to talk so people listen* was there all along.



# Compassion and wellbeing

Drawing on her extensive work looking into the wellbeing of nurses and social workers, Gail Kinman (University of Bedfordshire) spoke in the first keynote address of the British Psychological Society's Annual Conference about a key concern of occupational health psychologists – the implications of delivering compassionate care for the mental health of health and social care professionals.

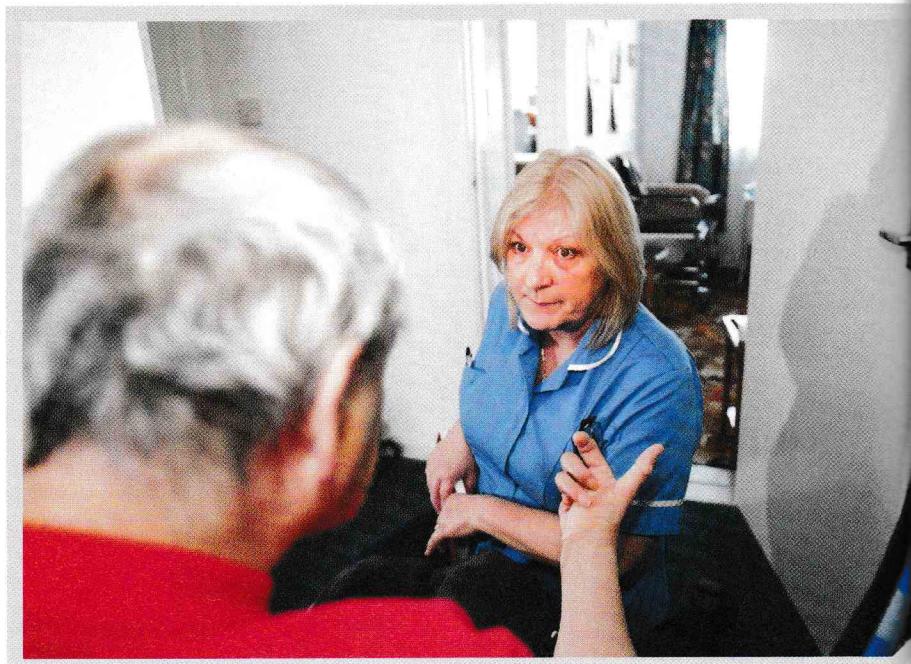
Some of the recent high-profile cases of failures of care, such as those documented in the Francis Report, Professor Kinman said, pointed to a need for a more compassionate culture of care. There has, she added, been some progress made towards such a culture, thanks to values-based recruitment techniques. But having a caring workforce is not enough – there also needs to be a focus on staff wellbeing and health.

Compassion, care and empathy are the cornerstone of health and social care, and employees often have an intrinsic drive to be involved in this sort of work. Kinman pointed out that many people go into caring work because they want to make a difference, and they have often had a notable experience in their early years.

Compassion benefits not only service users, who see compassionate clinical staff as more competent and are more likely to comply with their advice, but also professionals themselves. Showing compassion can lead to personal growth, and feelings of fulfilment from the job can help to prevent burnout.

But what of the current state of wellbeing in health and social care? A recent Labour Force Survey published by the Health and Safety Executive found that 46 per cent of employees in the health and social care sectors had experienced work-related stress, depression and anxiety over the previous year. Although comparatively high levels of absenteeism are also found in these sectors, presenteeism (where people show up for work when not physically or mentally well enough to do so) is a greater concern for the long-term health and effectiveness of the workforce.

Kinman said these professionals also experience emotional labour – or having to 'display' positive emotions to their patients or service users and mask their real feelings. This is a risk factor for burnout. She presented some recent figures from a study of burnout in social workers suggesting that 73 per cent experience high levels of emotional



Compassion, care and empathy are the cornerstone of health and social care

exhaustion (a key element of burnout), but over nine out of every ten respondents reported felt that they were making a difference to people's lives. The long-term implications of burnout are serious in terms of ill health, absenteeism and retention problems; Kinman outlined shocking figures that show the average working life of a social worker is only eight years – with three years in training and one in assessed practice. Similarly, two in every 10 nurses will have left the profession by their third year of practice.

What can protect people in caring professions against burnout? Kinman said self-care and compassion were key protective factors along with psychological capital – which comprises elements such as hope, optimism, self-efficacy and resilience. In her own work Kinman recruited several samples of social workers and nurses and found that emotional literacy, emotional self-efficacy, 'bounded' empathy, reflective ability, self-care and compassion were just some of the facets of resilience.

In another ongoing study, Kinman's team is following a cohort of nurses through their 36 months of training. Some of the protective factors for nurses' mental and physical health were having previous experience in a caring role, a moderate amount of intrinsic motivation, psychological capital (especially optimism

and hope), reflective ability, emotional support, psychological flexibility and a sense of belongingness gained from positive placement experiences.

Kinman and her collaborator, Louise Grant, have carried out intervention work with social workers along key points of their career paths. This included using an 'emotional log' to reflect upon emotional responses to interactions with service users (both positive and negative), leading to benefits for the trainees' emotional literacy, empathy and wellbeing. The social workers were also given an eight-week mindfulness intervention, and the researchers saw an increase in emotional self-efficacy, self-compassion, and compassion satisfaction.

Kinman said that while individually focused interventions were useful in building emotional resilience and protecting wellbeing, they risked pathologising people who are unable to cope. Burnout may very well be a logical response to the intense emotional demands of caring work, particularly as many areas have seen intense cutbacks in resources. Kinman added that work should not be hazardous to wellbeing, and that sources of stress are often on an organisational level rather than an intrinsic aspect of the job. It is therefore vital to carefully diagnose organisational hazards and monitor change over time. **ER**

# Real-world education

One duty of university educators is to prepare our students for life after university. Jens Binder, Thom Baguley and Fliss Miller (all Nottingham Trent University) evaluated the impact of student placements, often seen as a crucial way in which universities support employability. The study included over 15,000 students from across 186 degree courses at the university. In multilevel analysis, a placement was associated with an increased probability of gaining a higher final degree classification (2:1 or above) and a decreased probability of

a lower classification (2:2 or below). Completing a placement appeared to enhance final degree mark by 3.4 marks on average. Overall the benefit was surprisingly stable, with the effect remaining even when controlling for gender, ethnicity and whether the placement was optional.

Fay Short outlined an innovative approach used at the University of Bangor to provide students with a very different form of real-world education, in a symposium convened by the Division of Academics, Researchers and Teachers in Psychology on

teaching sensitive topics. Short reflected that historical atrocities, such as the Holocaust and other genocides, felt remote when taught in social psychology lectures to students who often had no personal connection to such events. To overcome the challenge of bringing the world to their students, they have begun taking their students to the world.

The first field trip organised was to Auschwitz, with the aim of enabling students to deepen their understanding through experiential learning. The visit was optional, and Short

stressed the importance of providing students with opportunities to prepare for the experience in advance and reflect on it afterwards. There was a delicate balance between supporting and empowering students through an emotionally intense experience. Upon their return the students were able to share their experience with peers who had been unable to go, widening the impact of the trip. An unexpected benefit was the strength of peer relationships formed amongst the students, who have themselves organised a repeat visit. **AJ**

# Coming unstuck?

Last August, Phil Banyard (Nottingham Trent University) wrote to *The Psychologist* bemoaning the lack of testable theories, headline discoveries and transformational products in psychology ([www.thepsychologist.org.uk/where-psychologys-non-stick-frying-pan](http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk/where-psychologys-non-stick-frying-pan)). Where, he asked, is our non-stick frying pan? In an animated late-night fringe event at this year's Annual Conference of the British Psychological Society, Banyard came face-to-face with BPS Research Board chair Professor Daryl O'Connor (University of Leeds) to defend his stance – which had proved somewhat unpopular.

Opening *The Psychologist* and Research Board 'Impact Challenge', Banyard claimed he is met with bluster whenever he asks colleagues what psychology's biggest achievement is. Some of their suggestions include the two-stage memory model: 'But doesn't that just say that you remember some things for a long time and others for a short time?', Banyard quipped. When chemistry has the periodic table, biology the theory of evolution and physics the theory of relativity, can psychology really stand alongside other sciences? Banyard said that many argued that psychology is a young science, but he countered: 'It's 150 years old – it's very young compared to physics, but not compared to genetics or electronics, which have given us so much more.'

*The Psychologist's* Managing Editor Dr Jon Sutton gave some examples of products developed via psychology including Black Magic chocolates, the Windows 'Star' button and the £1 coin ([www.thepsychologist.org.uk/where-psychologys-non-stick-frying-pan](http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk/where-psychologys-non-stick-frying-pan)). Then O'Connor began his rhetoric-packed reply with: 'This is the easiest gig of all time.' He

criticised Banyard for focusing on the psychology of the 1960s and 1970s and said he'd failed to mention one of psychology's greatest contributions – vision. Since the 1960s psychologists have helped us understand how we see and perceive the world. As well as hearing, speech, learning, O'Connor said psychology had shed new light on all the senses.

'Psychology has changed nearly every single thing we do; medicine, law. And it saves lives,' O'Connor argued. He pointed also to the government's 'Nudge Unit', where psychological principles underlie its policy recommendations and decisions.

Somewhat on the ropes following forceful blows from the enthusiastic audience, Banyard fought back with the repeated claim that psychology cannot be positioned as a science: that its theories, applications and potential products are simply not the same as in other sciences. He said in terms of the subject's focus

it was facing thoroughly in the wrong direction. Harking back to the research on memory which he opened with, Banyard drew on George Miller's address to the 1969 APA convention to suggest that psychology's real contribution is in how we understand ourselves.

O'Connor disagreed on the need for a grand theory – 'just because psychological research lacks a grounding in physics does not make it a lesser science'. A lively debate followed, including input from BPS Lead Policy Advisor Dr Lisa Morrison Coulthard on the Society's own contributions via the Impact Portal, which *The Psychologist* has begun to draw on for articles that demonstrate a concrete contribution to the world ([www.thepsychologist.org.uk/volume-29/february/riots-crowd-safety](http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk/volume-29/february/riots-crowd-safety)). **ER**



## 12 WAYS TO IMPACT

In this year's Presidential Address Professor Jamie Hacker Hughes showcased 12 ways in which the British Psychological Society makes an impact. Test your knowledge in Alana James's '12 Ways to Impact' quiz. Find the answers in a transcript of Jamie's address at <http://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/twelve-ways-make-impact> and then tweet them @psychmag for your chance to win a prize!

### 1. Research and Teaching

How many subscribers are there for the BPS Research Digest email?

a. Approx. 20,000; b. Approx. 32,000; c. Approx. 38,000

### 2. Conferences

How many conferences have been organised by the Society and its networks in the last year?

a. 21; b. 12; c. 18

### 3. Public Engagement

Which festival of literature did the BPS run events at in October?

a. Cheltenham Literature Festival  
b. Bath Literature Festival  
c. Bristol CrimeFest

### 4. and 5. Awards and Recognition

From the 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours List and the 2016 New Year's Honours List combined, how many psychologists have been made Dame Commanders of the Order of the British Empire in the last year?

a. 2; b. 3; c. 4

### 6. Media

How many news articles were generated from the 18 press releases at last year's Annual Conference?

a. 444; b. 555 c. 666

### 7. and 8. Practice and Policy

The BPS has started the process of entering a framework agreement with which psychotherapy organisations to further the Society's reach in that sector?

a. BACP and BPC; b. UKCP and BPC; c. BACP, BPC and UKCP

### 9. Politics

As far as we are aware, for the first time in the Society's history a psychologist has been elected as a Westminster MP. Who is it?

a. Lisa Cameron (SNP); b. Yvette Cooper (Labour)  
c. Alex Salmond (SNP)

### 10. Social Justice

In August 2015 psychologists walked 100 miles over 5 days, in Walk the Talk, to raise awareness of social policies that are leading to psychological distress. Where did they walk from and to?

a. BPS Leicester to the Houses of Parliament; b. BPS Leicester to BPS London; c. The Houses of Parliament to BPS Leicester

### 11. Structure

The Society's impact is achieved through the work of its members, committee members, Trustees and staff, and is currently in the midst of the biggest structural transformation in its history. At the time of the talk how many Divisions, Sections, Special Groups and Branches did the Society have?

a. 5 Divisions, 10 Sections, 2 Special Groups, and 8 Branches  
b. 10 Divisions, 15 Sections, 3 Special Groups, and 11 Branches  
c. 15 Divisions, 18 Sections, 4 Special Groups, and 12 Branches

### 12. Vision

What 'motto' might you have heard Jamie say frequently in his term as President about how the Society can achieve impact?

a. Yes we can; b. United we stand; c. Together, we can!

# Race, gender and caste in education

This year's winner of the Award for Promoting Equality of Opportunity, Paul Ghuman (Emeritus Professor, Aberystwyth University), was recognised for his career promoting equal opportunities in education. After moving to the UK from the Punjab in the 1950s, and via an interlude as a bus conductor in Reading, Ghuman became a teacher in a secondary-modern in Birmingham in 1959. Moving to a grammar school post showed him how the educational system was perpetuating social class inequalities; Ghuman's research has since confirmed the salience of social and cultural factors in educational performance.

His first research project, in the mid-1970s, explored the cognitive development of Punjabi boys in Birmingham and found that their performance was significantly closer to that of their English peers than their counterparts in the Punjab. In later years his work has addressed the struggles of Asian girls trying to reconcile the often conflicting demands of home, school and wider society and shone a light on the impact of the caste system. Ghuman realised that the system has reproduced itself in Indian diaspora in the UK with consequences for children who may experience bullying in Asian majority schools as a result of a Dalit, 'untouchable', caste identity forced upon them. AJ

**I** You can read more about Ghuman's research on Dalit resistance and identity in the July 2015 issue of *The Psychologist*



# Presidents' Award

Matthew Lambon Ralph (University of Manchester) was this year's recipient of the Presidents' Award, for research investigating the role of the anterior temporal lobe (ATL) in the neural basis of semantic representation. His journey so far has in a sense begun and ended with patients. Patients with semantic dementia experience impaired comprehension and anomia, with atrophy found in the ATL but not in other language regions; a puzzling finding given that the ATL is not implicated in classical aphasia models. Rather than accept this as a red herring, Lambon Ralph began utilising an array of technologies to uncover the mechanisms behind how semantics happen – describing himself as a 'frustrated psychological engineer'.

He found that early PET research had not identified ATL involvement because scans were either not deep enough or had not measured the bottom of the brain, and that using TMS to knock out ATL function impairs performance on synonym, but not number, tasks. Further, he has recently collaborated with neurologists in Kyoto who use electrode implantation to link neurological structures with function in pre-surgery patients with epilepsy. They found that direct cortical stimulation of the ATL impairs picture naming and synonym judgement. By sparing this region surgeons can now achieve better clinical outcomes for patients. AJ

# Rehabilitation after brain injury

To conclude the highly popular student conference, the Deputy Warden of Goldsmiths University of London, Professor Jane Powell, delivered a moving keynote address about her neuro-rehabilitation work with patients with traumatic and acquired brain injury. Her work has focused on the quality of life of these patients post-injury. Many are left with deficits in cognition, social skills, movement, sensory and perceptual problems and, potentially, reduced quality of life in general.

Professor Powell spent much of her career in the development of an outreach team that was focused on improving the quality of life of brain-injury treatments after discharge from hospital. She gave the example of one of the team's patients, Ben, a 22-year-old who suffered brain injury following assault. His problems ranged from having difficulty following conversations to PTSD symptoms such as flashbacks to the assault, in which he hit his head on a kerb.

Powell said in the late 1980s and early 90s there was little support for brain-injury patients post-discharge, and quality of life for these people was rarely assessed. She and a team from across 10 different countries developed the QOLIBRI scale to measure quality of life in this particular group. Its 37 questions with seven subscales aimed to measure some of the typical issues with quality of life patients suffer following brain injury. Initial work with the scale showed

patients with the most severe disability following brain injury had lower quality of life. However, Powell pointed out, only 30 per cent even of these patients with the most severe disability rated their quality of life as low.

The outreach team that Powell has been involved with was started in 1992 after the Department of Health funded 10 'model' services to develop community-based rehabilitation teams for brain-injured

people. The team, was, and is, truly multidisciplinary – though neuropsychologically led it also involves support from occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech and language specialists.

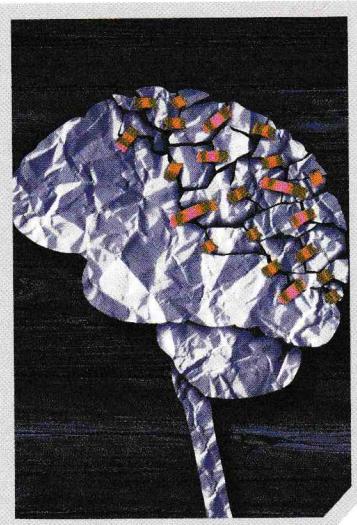
This group aims to help patients set achievable goals for patients to move towards more independent living and better overall quality of life. In Ben's case he was driven to live a more active, independent life and the team helped him along with this; encouraging his uncle to allow Ben to have more responsibility on the building sites on which they both worked, supporting Ben to get out using public transport, and teaching him strategies to tackle the anxiety he felt in social situations.

In a randomised control trial, Powell and her team looked at the effects of this kind of outreach work on patients' lives. They found around 70 per cent showed a marked improvement in at least one area of their lives. In more recent, ongoing work, patients in the outreach teams care are being assessed on a number of measures, including quality of life at admission, discharge and six months after discharge to assess whether the gains given by outreach work are maintained in the long term.

So far, increases in quality of life have been seen after discharge. Powell said some of the best predictors of good

quality of life are improved self-organisation skills, good mobility, psychological wellbeing and socialising. The best predictor of all is that a person is involved in productive employment, which includes voluntary work and participation in family work.

Powell finished her talk pointing to another patient's testimony of her work with the outreach team and recovery – human resilience is a truly astounding thing. **ER**



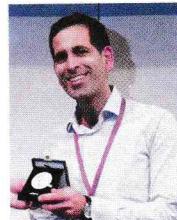
## SPEARMAN MEDAL

Can brain stimulation lead to improved learning in arithmetical tasks? The 2014 British Psychological Society Spearman Medal winner Dr Roi Cohen Kadosh (University of Oxford) has tested out this idea to see if transcranial random noise stimulation (tRNS) can improve performance and learning.

Cohen Kadosh taught participants an algorithm to solve arithmetical problems either with stimulation or without – it is impossible for participants to tell whether they have received it or not. He found this type of stimulation had the greatest effect on learning for particularly difficult problems (an effect that was replicated).

However, he pointed out, subjects differ in the levels of connectivity between essential brain areas – in this case the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex and parietal areas. In arithmetic training there is a shift from using the former to the latter as one becomes familiar with certain problems. Those with high functional connectivity between both areas tend to learn this type of problem better and do not benefit from stimulation. However, those with lower levels of connectivity showed a marked improvement with tRNS.

Stimulation for those with existing levels of high connectivity, Cohen Kadosh explained, can cause interference with these brain systems. He said in such experiments it was important to take into account the baseline physiology of individuals and how stimulation may affect certain people while interfering with the cognition of others.



Cohen Kadosh dedicated his award to Alan Cowey, who died last year. He said: 'When I joined the department as someone from outside it was quite overwhelming, and Alan was an island of sanity. His door was always open and he was always happy to give advice and mentor. It seems fitting that Alan was the second recipient of the Spearman Medal.'

The 2015 Spearman Medal winner, Dr Iroise Dumontheil (Birkbeck, University of London), followed with a whistlestop tour of her developmental and adult work looking into the brain systems involved in cognitive control and social cognition. She has found these two systems work in parallel, when an executive function task requires the use of social information and vice versa, however the two systems don't interact. Dr Dumontheil is also looking into the differences between individuals' dopamine systems and what role this plays in social cognition. **ER**

# All consuming myths

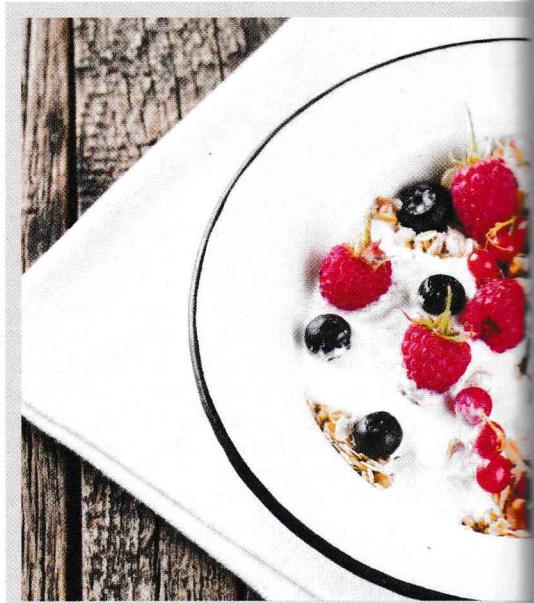
Can beer make you smarter? Are blueberries the key to a long and healthy life? Newspaper headlines appear almost every week that make bold claims for the next big 'super-food'. In some cases reports are conflicting about the benefits and risk of certain substances. For example, red wine has often been cited in the news as being beneficial for cardiovascular health, yet at the same time articles report a rise in risky levels of drinking in the adult population and advise cutting down. During this Psychobiology Section symposium on diet and brain health, convened by University of Northumbria's Philippa Jackson, researchers attempted to counter some of these myths and provide an overview of current evidence in this important area for our health.

As Daniel Lampert from the University of Reading highlighted in his talk, some newspapers did report that beer would indeed make you smarter: however, you would need to drink so much of it that your overall health would most likely be harmed. Lampert's talk discussed evidence on flavonoids, which are found in a range of food groups, especially fruit and vegetables. These polyphenols bring about

a range of benefits to physical health, including lower risk of stroke and improved heart function, but how do they affect cognitive functioning? Rodent research has demonstrated that they can reduce the impact of ageing on cognitive functioning in older animals. With our ageing population, these types of findings are promising if they can be replicated in humans. In the short term, studies have shown that blueberry juice can improve memory test performance in a typical population, while in children with ADHD, blueberries improved attention and reaction times. While more research is needed, Lampert pointed out that

some of the benefits of flavonoids tend to be found in people who were not eating any to start with. In other words, they could bring about the most improvements for more at-risk groups of people who are otherwise consuming unhealthy diets.

Such healthy eating habits are often developed during the critical period of adolescence. Our eating habits during this time tend to persist into adulthood, and so



it is vital that we learn to choose healthy meals. Some suggest that breakfast may be one of the most important meals, and Louise Dye of Leeds University spoke about a review of the benefits of eating breakfast. Compared with eating no breakfast, eating this meal was associated with a range of short-term improvements to attention, memory and executive functioning. For young people, breakfast

## WHAT COUNTS AS HAPPINESS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

What makes you happy? Happiness research is a growing and important field for psychologists, so it is timely to consider what exactly happiness is, and how we should measure it. Cordelia Sutton from the Open University argues that much research so far has sought out the meaning of happiness from a quantitative perspective, and that this might be too narrow for such a complex concept. Specifically, Sutton is concerned with adolescence, because prior research has tended to focus on adults, and her research was conducted to try to understand what meanings were attached to the notion of happiness in 13- to 15-year-olds using qualitative techniques. Participants were asked to draw a 'happiness



map', with themselves at the centre. Then they were asked to draw things that were most important to their happiness near to the centre, and moving outwards to draw other less important things on the outer circles of the map.

To illustrate Sutton's argument for the need to conduct qualitative research in this area, these maps, drawn by 40 participants, revealed 672 different items that were important for the participants' happiness; and over a third were

mentioned by just one person. The most common items were family, friends, music, pets and food. Interestingly, food was one of a number of items that made the participants unhappy as well as happy, for example if it was unhealthy, or if you ate too much of a favourite item. When reflecting on happiness, the participants also considered the flipside, showing how the status of happiness changes across time during adolescence.

While this was a small study using a novel method, the sheer breadth of items discussed during the interviews shows the complexity of happiness, and how it is described by young people. Sutton plans to follow up these discussions with focus groups, and use her findings to contribute to better methods for happiness research. **ED**

interventions often involve giving children the opportunity to have the meal at school, in 'breakfast clubs'. However, the secondary benefits might be improved social relationships, and increased academic performance. Breakfast clubs also tend to lead to better attendance at school, which of course also improves pupil performance. Dye pointed out that this means it is difficult to determine what specific nutritional components lead to the greatest benefits for children; she also highlighted that the biggest improvements are seen in more deprived areas.

Also in this symposium, Leigh Gibson from the University of Roehampton talked about links between cognition and mobility in the elderly. Gibson reported on a randomised controlled trial to test whether omega-3 fatty acid supplements

could improve cognition and mobility in older women. Omega-3 is found in fish such as salmon and tuna. The researchers found that there were some really positive improvements to the walking speed and test scores on a battery of cognitive tests six months following the intervention, but some people appear to respond to the multi-nutrient intervention much better than others. More information is needed about the specific physiological effects of specific nutrients on the brain, and whether they be delivered via breakfast interventions, blueberry juices, or in tablet form.

Philippa Jackson from Northumbria University discussed the use of an accessible measure of brain imaging, near infrared spectroscopy (NIRS) and its use in exploring the physiological effects of diet. This piece of equipment has the benefit of being lower in cost and easier to use than other neuroimaging techniques, thus it may be a practical way that researchers can explore how the effects of nutritional

interventions, rather than relying solely on cognitive tests or behavioural measures. Jackson and her team have used NIRS to measure the effects of caffeine, fatty acids and resveratrol, which is the 'magic ingredient' in red wine that led the newspapers to hail it as a miracle substance. The findings of these studies suggest that it is a feasible and reliable method by which to increase our knowledge of the specific impact of our diet on the functioning of the brain. Techniques such as this allow researchers to build up a more complete picture of the impacts of specific nutrients.

We can of course expect many more attention-grabbing headlines, but rest assured that behind these news stories, our colleagues are working hard to understand more about the impacts of our diets in order to make evidence-based recommendations to improve our overall health. **ED**

## Sexuality in later life

A fascinating symposium explored the developing field of sexuality among older people. Among discussion of the marketing of Viagra and body image in the older LGBT population were talks on wellbeing and sexuality in later life and those with dementia who identify as LGBT.

Sharron Hinchliff, who works within the School of Nursing and Midwifery at the University of Sheffield, said sexual wellbeing was a relatively new term and has only recently been examined within the older population. Dr Hinchliff said that, despite belief in popular culture, many older people remain sexually active though there are some physical barriers to sex, including issues with the genitals themselves, physical health and medications that may interfere with sexual functioning.

Her own work has found people feel frustrated, rejected or distressed when there is no sex in their relationship. She went on to cast a critical eye over much of the research into sexual wellbeing, pointing out that there's only a small amount of such research on older people and that most is focused on heterosexual sex. Much is also quantitative, Hinchliff added, and so we know little about older people's experiences. Viewing problems in sex within a biomedical framework as a disease or dysfunction means that people see them as an inevitable side of getting older and may not seek treatment or advice for their problems – even if it's impacting on their lives.

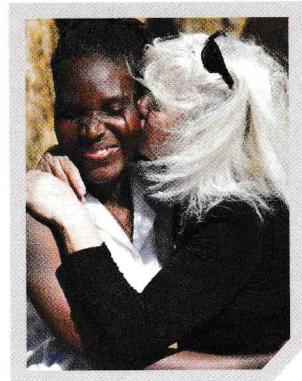
Hinchliff suggested potential future directions for research including the need to define 'older people'; some research classes those over 50 as 'older' while other research focuses on 70-plus. The difference in experience between the two groups can be vast, and Hinchliff said it was also important to acknowledge that not all older people wanted to be sexually active.

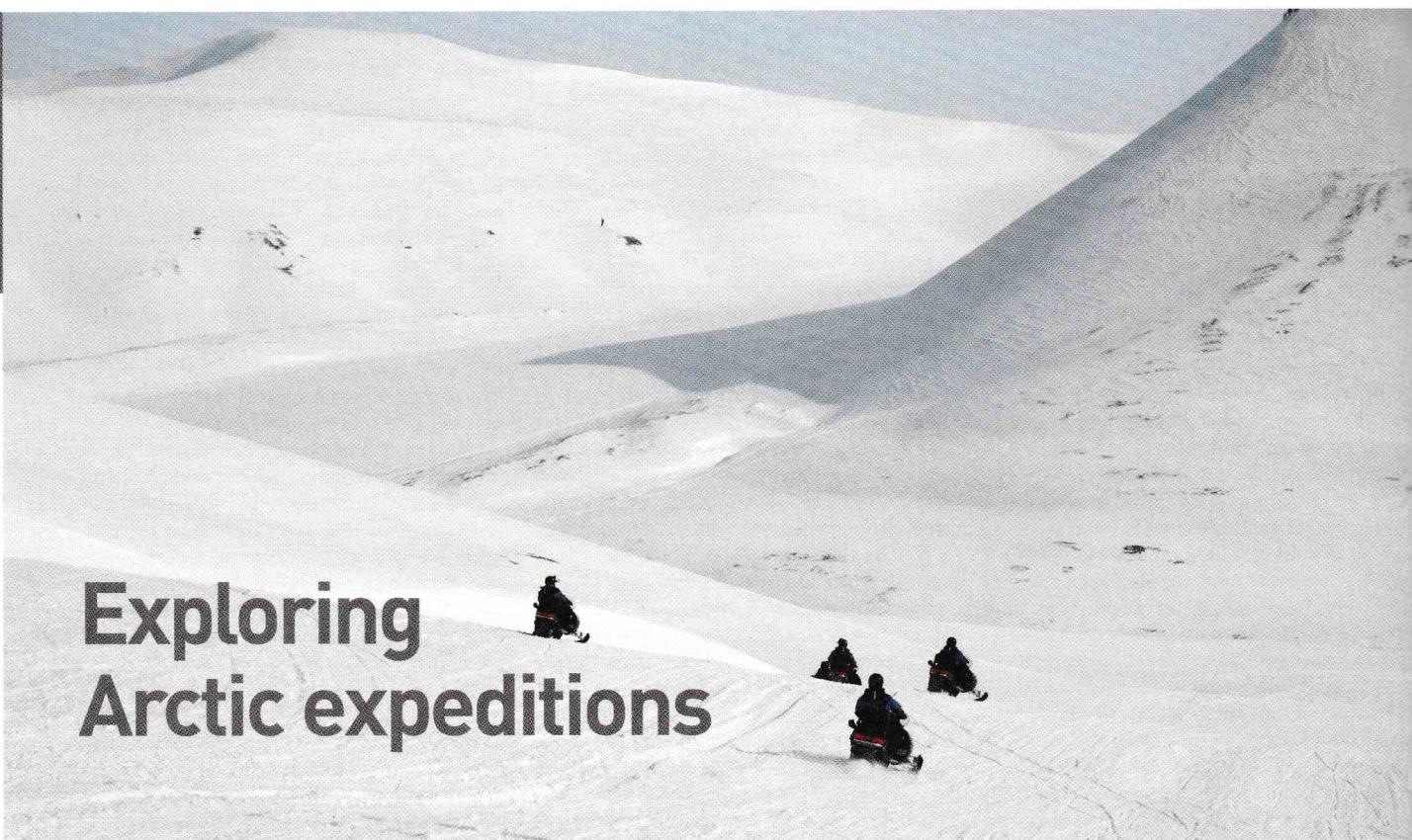
Joanne Brooke (University of West London) has worked in a team of researchers looking at people with dementia who also

identify as LGBT, and the different needs and barriers of this group. The literature in the area is extremely sparse, Brooke said, and many studies did not set out to look into LGBT people and dementia but only made mention of the population. There were no studies exploring the challenges transgender people face in dementia care. Looking at work from 2006 onwards – when important papers changed care, and there was more discussion around the human rights of people with dementia – Brooke identified 14 studies for inclusion in a scoping review. The main theme seen was a lack of recognition and relative invisibility of the LGBT people within dementia services. There was also a fear of disclosure of sexual orientation to healthcare professionals.

Brooke said the role of stigma was important: older LGBT people are doubly stigmatised and when dementia is added into this mix they feel even more so. Older adults are also often presumed by carers to be heterosexual or not sexual at all, and sex among older people with dementia is seen as a symptom rather than sexual expression – even without context of a person's previous sexual behaviour. Also consider that many older LGBT people will have grown up in a society which pathologised homosexuality. During dementia people may revert back to previous traumatic experiences, and as a result some of the LGBT population may fear coming out to healthcare professionals.

Brooke concluded that while LGBT people are not included in dementia research, their voices will not be heard. She suggested that sexual and gender minority monitoring data needed to be routinely collected offering an opportunity to determine the number of LGBT people with dementia. **ER**





## Exploring Arctic expeditions

Imagine going on an expedition through the Arctic, carrying a heavy pack with everything you need to survive at sub-zero temperatures, battling the elements, fighting off frostbite, and keeping a keen eye out for polar bears. You are tired, hungry and cold. However tough and perhaps unappealing this might sound, these physical challenges may be much easier to cope with than the challenge of maintaining positive and supportive relationships with your fellow explorers.

According to Danny Golding of the University of Bedfordshire, who has been conducting research into stress and coping during expeditions, the social aspects of these journeys are vital to their success. Defined as a journey with a purpose, expeditions appear to be underresearched in comparison to other aspects of sport and exercise psychology. Given their social and cultural significance, Golding sought to shed light on what he calls the 'unique micro-cultures' that emerge within these temporary communities.

Golding's interest in this unique topic area was sparked when he took up a call for teachers, like himself at the time, to join a five-week East-West crossing of the Greenland Icecap. Together with his group, he travelled using skis, kites and dogs in the style of a classic polar journey, relaying the findings of science projects they conducted during the trip back to schools. Golding's current research applies a transactional model to explore the structure and dimensions of stress and coping during expeditions such as these. Using in-depth qualitative analyses of diaries, field notes, interviews and momentary capture, Golding has developed a model of coping that considers the social, environmental, external, and personal factors that contribute to stress during a journey.

The research has drawn on participants who have taken part in five quite different, but similarly challenging expeditions, for example a five-month Antarctic journey, and a two-week mountain and river journey. Within these experiences, findings suggest that proactive coping strategies helped the participants to respond to the magnitude of the challenges that they faced. It became clear

that having a set routine for daily tasks was important, as was planning, preparation and harmonising with the environment. Participants also reported using various adaptive strategies to help them to 'switch off' when the going was tough. For example, by repeatedly listening to a set playlist of music, saving food for specific times and, as one participant put it, 'trying consciously not to think'.

The micro-culture within the team was, however, one of the most important factors that helped participants cope with the strains of the expedition. Golding says that this is the key to a happy and contented outcome, and consequently, a sense of growth from participating in such an extreme experience. If the team can support each other they can focus on shared goals and complete their tasks in a cohesive manner. When negative behaviours were perceived or experienced, this led to tension, strain, and conflict. According to one participant, when this happened, they felt like the journey became a 'prison sentence'.

It might be difficult to understand just why people put themselves in these challenging situations. However, overcoming such adversity may enable these explorers to achieve personal growth, and the ability to overcome some of the problems faced on the journey was seen as a good experience. Participants suggested that they are attracted to such journeys because they are not experienced by many others. For some, these experiences allow them to feel significant and part of something bigger within the world. All of these factors may contribute to the overall wellbeing of those who endure such tough journeys. Golding now hopes to extend this work by moving on from stress and coping to exploring aspects of eudaimonic wellbeing.

For the rest of us, perhaps it is time to consider dusting off that backpack, gathering up a carefully selected group of friends, and heading off to the wilds, to face some extreme hardship and new environments. We may just become a little bit more resilient and happier because of it. **ED**

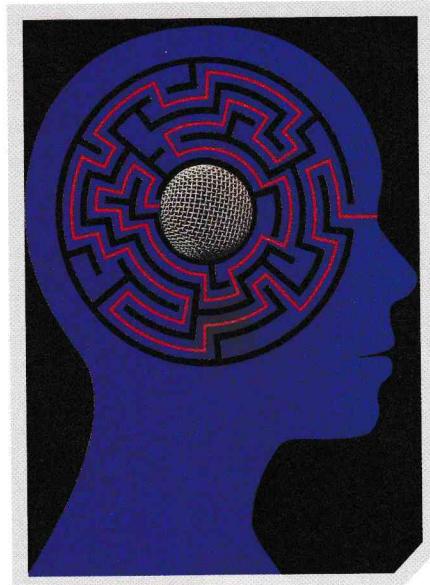
# Tackling the hard problems

In his new book *The Voices Within: The History and Science of How We Talk to Ourselves*, psychologist and novelist Professor Charles Fernyhough (Durham University) notes that William James once described reflecting on one's own thoughts as 'trying to turn up the gas quickly enough to see how the darkness looks'. As part of the student stream at the Society's Annual Conference, Fernyhough served as a shining example of a classy, old-school psychologist who's not afraid to tackle the hard problems.

'The voices within' is dedicated to Cambridge psychologist James Russell and it's easy to see why: the pair share a love of 'cumulative, substantial, satisfying' psychology that considers not what we are like or what we tend to do, but how it is that we can do what we can do (<https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-29/january-2016/king-ghosts>). Here Fernyhough hopped from descriptive experience sampling to brain imaging, from present to future to past, from science to art.

That tour de force began with a segue from the Mel Gibson film *What Women Want* to the thinking of Fernyhough's obvious hero, Lev Vygotsky, a Soviet developmental psychologist born in 1896. The former is an interesting view of how our culture views thinking, largely as internal language. The latter's 'beautifully simple, incredibly rich ideas' propose that children are social from day one, and that inner speech comes from private speech, which comes from social dialogue. This means that inner speech has a dialogic quality, and it can be expanded or condensed. Throughout our lives, we can move between these levels.

But how can psychologists study such an ineffable phenomenon? Fernyhough covered individual difference studies, dual-task paradigms that 'knock out' speech, and neuroscientific methods. His passion, though, seems to be the 'descriptive experience sampling' method pioneered and developed by Russ Hurlburt. Starting out as an engineer working for a company that made nuclear weapons, Hurlburt had devoured books from the Arlington County Library. 'What I found was that every book in psychology would start by saying, "I'm going to tell you something interesting about people"', he told Fernyhough, 'and then I'd get to the end of the book and say, "Well, I didn't learn anything that I thought was actually very interesting: I learned the theory but I didn't learn



anything about the person." I thought, if you could just randomly sample [people's everyday experience], that would be good.'

Catching inner speech as it happens naturally, Hurlburt has found there isn't as much of it as you might expect. Inspired by Hurlburt's work, Fernyhough has developed a smartphone app 'Inner Life', and has now taken a similarly naturalistic approach to inner speech in the brain scanner. Fernyhough has discovered that when you wait for inner speech to happen naturally, you get activation in bilateral Heschl's gyrus (auditory perception) but not in Broca's area, left interior frontal gyrus (speech production). When inner speech is instead elicited, you get the opposite pattern. If this distinction is seen more widely with other tasks, it could have big implications for neuroimaging studies.

Leaping back 600 years to *The Book of Margery Kempe* (see [tinyurl.com/zwtjjth](http://tinyurl.com/zwtjjth)), Fernyhough demonstrated how voices take on an extraordinary range of forms. They can be auditory but non-verbal, auditory but non-human, even multisensory. All of this is prefigured/described beautifully in this medieval manuscript. Fernyhough gave an evocative account of Margery's meeting in Norwich with Dame Julian of Norwich, whose *Revelations of Divine Love* is the first book in English known to have been written by a woman. In this 'early hearing voices group' the women described the distressing, weird experience of hearing voices as 'a conversation you can't quite overhear'.

One model of voice hearing suggests that such experiences involve a 'misattribution' of normal inner speech to an external source. But if this were the case, why do such people have any normal inner speech at all? Vaughan Bell has also pointed out that such models neglect social dimensions of voice hearing. Fernyhough and the Hearing the Voice team at Durham are now working with UCL's Joanne Atkinson on inner experience and voice hearing in people who have been deaf from birth.

For any budding psychologist in the audience, this was a timely reminder that their careers don't have to unfold as learning more and more about less and less until they know absolutely everything about nothing. Fernyhough is a true polymath who seeks out problems that are so blindingly obvious most others have failed to see them; he then hops over disciplinary boundaries, nips about in time and borrows all manner of navigation aids in search of paths to enlightenment. JS



**The fashion industry and media tend to portray older women in either a negative or unrealistic light, with evidence suggesting that exposure to the media ideal of how a woman should look is associated with body dissatisfaction. Carolyn Mair and Soljana Cili of the London College of Fashion sought to explore the impact of these images and the views of women aged 40-89 on this important topic. Almost half of their survey participants reported being annoyed with how women their age were presented in advertisements, and nearly 40 per cent reported that this made them feel bad about their appearance. The researchers point to a need for marketers to step away from airbrushed models and represent a wider range of women, if they want to continue to attract consumers. ED**

# Facing the facts

It is well known in psychology that there's something special about faces – they embody our sense of self, we have dedicated regions in the brain for processing them, and humans are excellent at recognising faces. Or are we?

Professor Dame Vicki Bruce (University of Newcastle) explained that her interest in faces began with cases of mistaken identity by eyewitnesses that had led to wrongful convictions. She gave the example of Ronald Cotton, convicted of a horrific rape after the victim, Jennifer Thompson, pointed to him in a photo array and subsequent live line-up. Cotton spent 10 years in prison before it emerged that another man had committed the rape. Thompson, who now campaigns together with Cotton to spread the word on wrongful convictions based on eyewitness testimony, had said:

When I first saw the photo of him and I saw the pictures of the men that were in front of me. Ronald Cotton – he just *looked exactly like* the man who raped me. And not a lot of time had elapsed between the crime and me looking at the pictures, so my memory was still very fresh. And then when I saw him in the physical line-up and I was actually able to see him as a person and his demeanor and his postures – it just further convinced me that Ronald Cotton was the man. He *looked exactly like* the man. He *looked like* the sketch that I had given to the police.

Our italics here highlight Bruce's key point: that resemblance is not the same as identity. We excel at recognising resemblance, but we need to understand that there are shifts in representation as faces become more familiar. Seeing a resemblance has seen many people get convicted wrongfully: and, in the case of Jean Charles de Menezes, killed.

In some of her early work Bruce found that people were surprisingly bad at matching a face to the same face shown in an array at a slightly different angle – something she thought people would score 100 per cent in. It appears we are poor at comparing faces, even if we are just shown a pair of faces and asked if

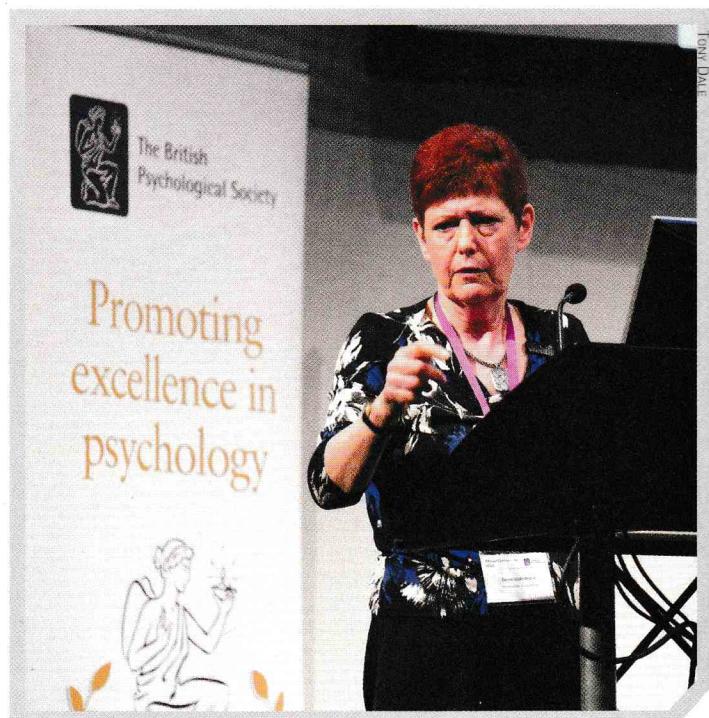
they're the same. When experts in the area, in this case passport control officers, are asked to do a similar task they also perform poorly. It seems two pictures of the same person taken a few years apart can look very different while two pictures of different people can look surprisingly similar.

Bruce suggested we may be over-confident in our own ability to recognise faces. It is quite common knowledge from neuroscience that we have processes in the brain for this purpose alone, and face recognition is a staple of popular fiction and in the media. The true picture may be quite different.

When witnesses are asked to identify suspects in a line-up or photo array, Bruce said,

## ACADEMIC DOPING

Doping usually refers to substance use to enhance performance, but academic doping may instead be connected to hiding poor performance. Lambros Lazuras (Sheffield Hallam University) and colleagues conducted a social-cognitive study of use of neuroenhancement substances (NES) amongst 348 undergraduates. Use was predicted by positive attitudes and subjective norms towards NES, and by mastery avoidance goals. Rather than trying to achieve superior academic performance, students appear to use NES to overcome learning deficits. AJ



they should simply be asked who most resembles the offender rather than pointing the finger to who did it. She moved on to the use of composite sketch programmes in investigations where witnesses are asked to focus on individual facial features. In experiments where participants are asked to make a composite of an unfamiliar face, such as a snooker player, then snooker fans attempt to identify the player, accuracy is 'woeful' according to Bruce. Why is it so hard to create a recognisable composite?

Bruce explained that using memory to recall specific facial features is unnatural and difficult. Witnesses would also be unfamiliar with the faces and in this case they tend to recognise external features such as ears and hair rather than internal facial features. In contrast, we remember internal features of familiar faces. In an experiment subjects were asked to match a photo to one of a group of composite sketches – when internal features were blurred they showed good recognition, but when only internal features were visible performance was poor.

So how could these systems be improved to create more recognisable composites in police investigations? Bruce pointed out four potential ways – the first, in cases where there are multiple witnesses, is to get each to create a composite and morph these. In these morphed faces the features that are agreed-on across witnesses will be more visible and errors will be minimised.

Second, in interviewing witnesses it is useful to use a holistic approach by asking people about traits of the face including attractiveness and intelligence. Evidence has shown this interviewing method results in better composites compared to a usual interview focusing on individual facial features.

Third, it is useful to exploit people's natural ability for seeing resemblance across faces. The Evofit system presents groups of faces that are built out of certain features. People pick those that most resemble the target and the array of faces evolves to come closer to the person's actual face. In this case people aren't forced to recall individual features but faces as a whole.

Finally, it can be useful to focus first on internal features of a face by using the Evofit system but blurring out external features, and adding on external features later, which results in more accurate composites. Bruce concluded her fascinating talk by suggesting that we use what we know about face recognition to build even more accurate and helpful tools for investigations. ER

# World shifts – the effects of direct and indirect trauma exposure

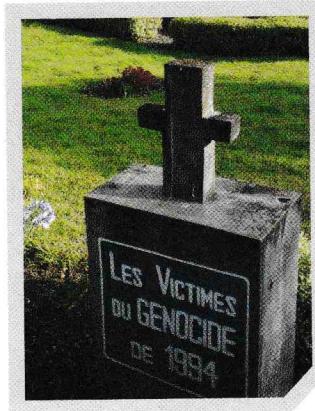
Survivors of a traumatic event may in time experience psychological adjustment, a coping process where they readjust. There is debate as to whether survivors can also undergo post-traumatic growth, a transformative process of positive psychological change as a result of dealing with highly challenging circumstances. Laura Blackie, Stephen Joseph and Nicki Hitchcott (University of Nottingham) analysed testimonies of 22 survivors of the Rwandan genocide, written 10 to 17 years after the event. The themes of acceptance, hope and feeling a responsibility to live were considered to reflect psychological adjustment. Themes of wisdom and forgiveness, however, appeared linked to post-traumatic growth, as they involved going beyond managing one's pain and distress.

Another study indicated that the impact of traumatic events can extend beyond those immediately affected. Menachem Ben-Ezra (Ariel University) conducted a nationally representative survey of 1982 French citizens four weeks after the Charlie Hebdo attack. Nearly 12 per cent fitted symptoms of PTSD, compared with a historical prevalence of 4.9 per cent in France. Substantial proportions reported heightened mortality salience and lowered sense of personal safety, and that the attack had caused a shift in their political views.

The impact of indirect trauma exposure is also felt by professionals who support survivors. Sarbjit Johal and Zoe Mounsey (Massey University/GNS Science) interviewed 25

mental health professionals who supported citizens in Canterbury, New Zealand following the series of earthquakes between 2010 and 2012. Over the two-year period there were 57 earthquakes above 5.0 magnitude, meaning recurrent fear of injury or loss of life and protracted stress of repeated insurance valuations. Professionals faced a dual exposure: as residents, they were themselves personally affected by the same issues as their clients. Thematic analysis identified challenges including ongoing higher workload, and compassion fatigue and burnout. The shared experience could be positive for clients, but led to blurred boundaries and repeated rehashing of personal trauma for practitioners.

Johal also reflected upon researchers' vicarious exposure to trauma, which can be prolonged and overlooked. Measures adopted in their study to reduce the negative impact included spacing interviews, increasing supervision, and planned withdrawal from the research. It is important that the impact of trauma on direct and indirect survivors is understood, and that the support needs of both mental health professionals and researchers are safeguarded. AJ



## Language and ageing

What happens to our linguistic skills as we get older?

Neurolinguist Professor Loraine Obler (CUNY Graduate Center), started her talk with one piece of good news: some abilities will be retained with age. Vocabulary in particular, she said, improves throughout life. However, the main crux of her humorous talk explored those things, linguistically speaking, we can all expect to struggle with in older age – some aspects of language even start to decline scarily early in life.

Naming ability, which doesn't just include nouns but the whole lexicon, seems to begin its decline at around the age of just 50. In one of her studies Obler asked people to name actions or objects when presented with pictures. Although people are better at naming actions, naming of

nouns and verbs seems to start to decline at the same time, and at about the same rate.

Obler has also assessed whether health can play any role in the decline of language with age. A group of 174 participants aged between 55 and 90, half of whom had hypertension, were tested on action and noun-naming. Hypertension is linked to mini-strokes, Obler pointed out, which can affect brain regions associated with naming. Indeed she saw this group were less accurate in their naming by about 1.3 per cent – a significant effect in action naming and near-significant in noun naming.

In another study participants were asked to repeat the final word of a sentence – some predictable, some not – with differing amounts of noise overlaid.

Groups were controlled for their hearing using pure tone averages and speech discrimination scores. When the last word was predictable and noise levels were low those in their seventies performed as well as those in their thirties – but, Obler said, in every other condition you see a linear decline in performance with age.

In another complex sentence comprehension test, where participants indicate the truth of a sentence that may include double or triple negatives – for example 'Because the ceiling light is not off the room is dark' – there is a decline in accuracy that is also linked with age. Comprehension of complex syntax is worse under stressed conditions, including with overlaid noise or unpredictable content. ER

## YOUR REPORTERS

**Dr Emma L. Davies – Oxford Brookes University**

**Dr Alana James – Royal Holloway, University of London**

**Ella Rhodes – Journalist**

**Dr Jon Sutton – Managing Editor**

**For additional reports, see [thepsychologist.bps.org.uk](http://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk). We may also be collating them in a free special edition in our iOS/Android app.**

**For information on next year's BPS Annual Conference, to be held in Brighton next May, see [www.bps.org.uk/ac2017](http://www.bps.org.uk/ac2017) and the advertisement on p.i (centre-page pull-out) of this issue.**



The British  
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Professional Practice Board

## Award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychology in Practice

The Professional Practice Board invites nominations for this annual award to recognise and reward psychologists who have made an outstanding contribution to professional practice within the United Kingdom.

It is anticipated that this award will be made to a psychologist in mid-career.

### Award

The Award will confer life membership of the Society and a commemorative certificate will be presented to the recipient at the Annual Conference of the Society. The recipient will also deliver an address at the said Annual Conference.

### Criteria

The Award for Distinguished Contributions is open to any current practitioner of psychology in any area of professional applied psychology and is not restricted to members of the Society. It is anticipated that the nominee will be employed or self-employed for the majority of their time as a professional psychologist engaged in the delivery of a service to the public. The award will not be made to psychologists whose main area of work is within an academic department.

Nominations should be sent to the Chair of the Professional Practice Board at the Society's office to arrive no later than **Thursday 1 December 2016**.

Full details are available from Carl Bourton at the Society's Leicester office (e-mail: carl.bourton@bps.org.uk).

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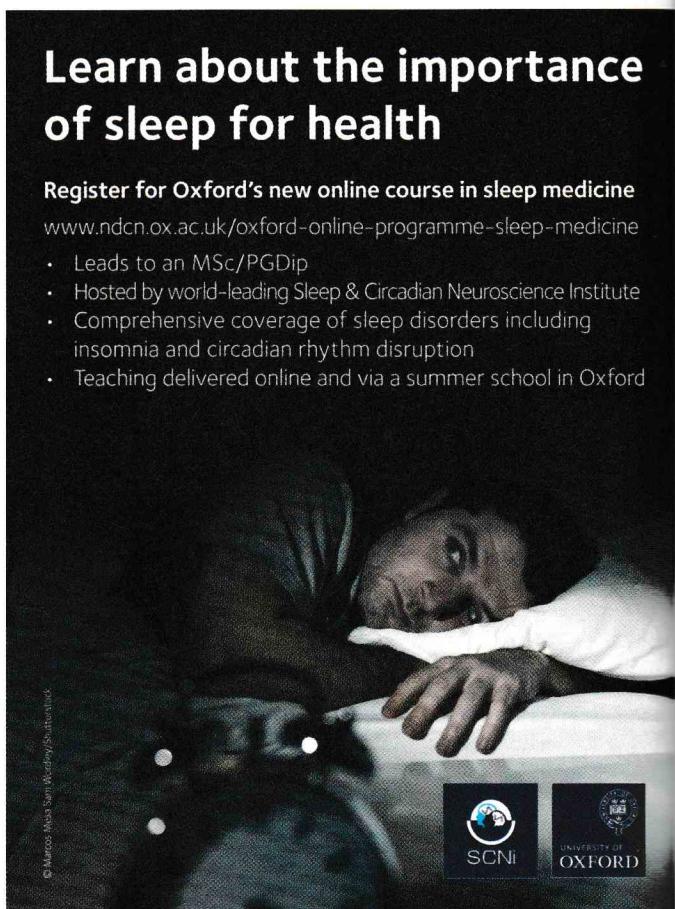


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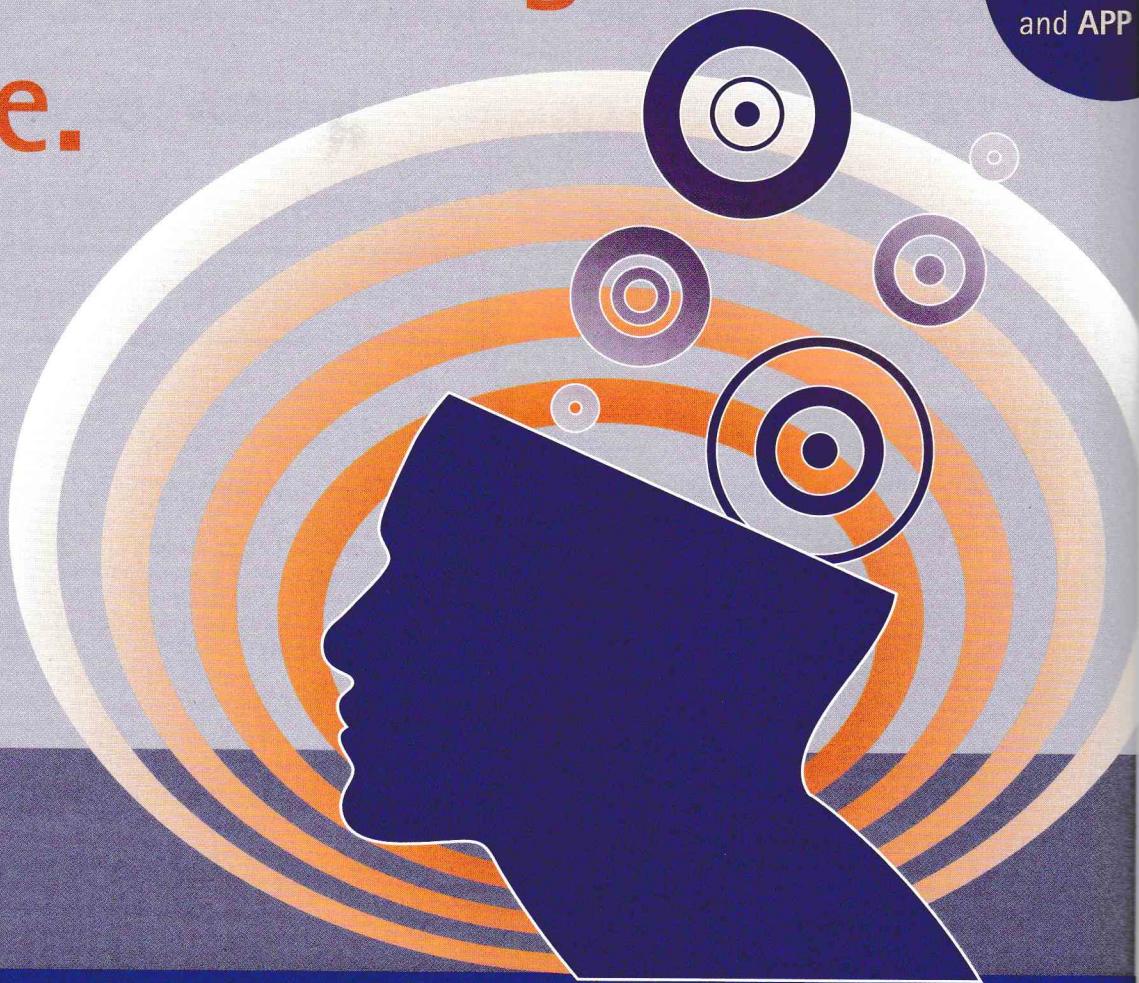
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**Dr Helen Bevan**, *Chief of Service Transformation at the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement*

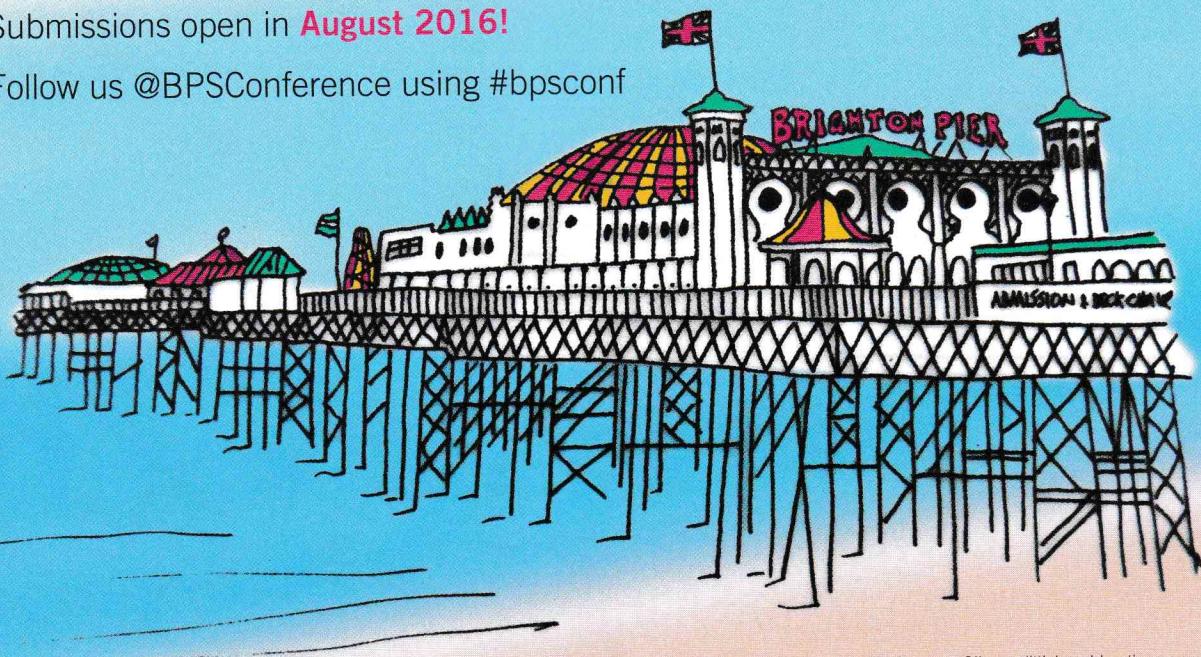
**Professor Rosalind Gill**, *City University London*

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**Dr Martin E.P. Seligman**, *Director of the Positive Psychology Centre, University of Pennsylvania, USA*

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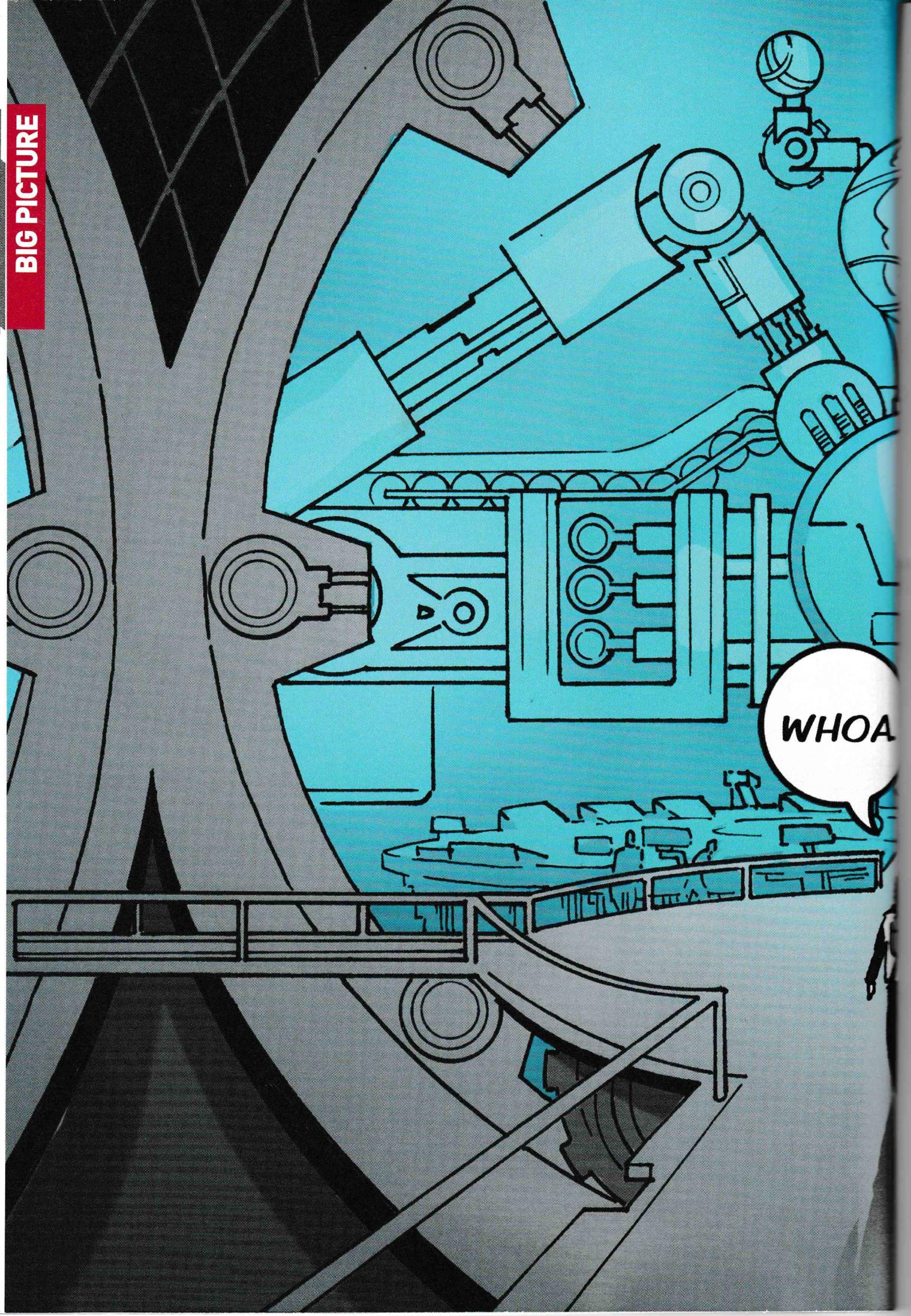
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BIG PICTURE



## Zach visits the Beimeni Centre

Words by Professor Andy Field (University of Sussex); image by James Iles ([www.jamesilesstudio.com](http://www.jamesilesstudio.com))

Eight years ago I had the idea to write a fictional story through which the student learns statistics via a shared adventure with the main character. I thought it would be cool to collaborate with a graphic novel illustrator. The idea stuck, and after five years of planning and writing *An Adventure in Statistics: The Reality Enigma* is complete.

Superficially, the book is a story about a musician, Zach, searching for his girlfriend, Alice – a scientific genius who mysteriously disappears. However, it's also about Zach facing his fear of science and numbers, about him learning to believe in himself. It's about love, remembering who you are, and finding the heartbeats hiding in the gaps between you and the people you love. It's also about statistics, which I hope will effortlessly sink in to readers' brains while they are engrossed in the story. If nothing else, the statistics might be relief from the terrible fiction. We'll see.

I worked with the fantastic James Iles, who created graphic novel strips that are woven throughout the book. This is one of my favourite panels. Zach has just broken into the Beimeni Centre, where Alice works. He stands in awe at the laboratory in front of him, dazzled by the realisation of how brilliant Alice is. He feels out

of his depth in her world, and suffocated by the magnitude of his quest. I love the colours and the sense of space that James has created, but also that this moment is a metaphor for both the reader and myself. Zach represents the many students who stare at their statistics modules and feel a little 'whoa' about the journey ahead. He also represents me at the start of the project, realising how out of my comfort zone I was, and now at the end feeling overwhelmed at fulfilling an ambition that I thought was beyond me.

*An Adventure in Statistics: The Reality Enigma* by Andy Field is out now, published by Sage. For more information and to buy the book, see <https://study.sagepub.com/field-an-adventure-in-stats>

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The Education and Public Engagement Board and the Association for Technical Staff in Psychology are delighted to invite nominations for a new annual award. The award recognises the valuable role that technicians play in supporting the student learning experience within their psychology departments.

The Award seeks to recognise excellence by psychology technicians in one or more of the following criteria:

- Technological skill
- Interpersonal communication skills
- Instruction/teaching skills
- Admin/finance skills
- Problem solving
- Innovative skills
- Special skills

There should be a single application for each nominee, which should take the form of a narrative report evidencing each of the criteria above. This should be a maximum of 1000 words supported by testimonials from staff or students as appropriate. Applications should be submitted by the Head of Department by 31 October 2016.

For further information on how to make a nomination and the award criteria please contact [emma.smith@bps.org.uk](mailto:emma.smith@bps.org.uk)

### **Technical Support in Psychological Research Award**

Closing date for nominations: 31 October 2016

The Research Board and the Association for Technical Staff in Psychology are delighted to invite nominations for the annual award recognising the valuable role that technicians play in supporting research within their psychology departments.

The Award seeks to recognise excellence by psychology technicians in the following areas of skill:

- Using technology
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- Instruction/research
- Problem solving
- Innovation
- Special skills
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- Publications

There should be a single application for each nominee, which should take the form of a narrative report evidencing each of the criteria above. This should be a maximum of 1000 words supported by testimonials from staff or students as appropriate.

For further information on how to make a nomination and the award criteria please contact [emma.smith@bps.org.uk](mailto:emma.smith@bps.org.uk)



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# Positive psychology – the second wave

Tim Lomas delves into the dialectical nuances of flourishing

It is nearly 20 years since Martin Seligman used his American Psychological Association presidential address to inaugurate the notion of 'positive psychology'. The rationale for its creation was Seligman's contention that psychology had tended to focus mainly on what is wrong with people: on dysfunction, disorder and distress. There were of course pockets of scholarship that held a candle for human potential and excellence, like humanistic psychology. Nevertheless, Seligman argued that on the whole, concepts such as happiness did not attract much attention or credibility in mainstream psychology. Emerging to redress this lacuna, positive psychology soon became a fertile new paradigm, encompassing research into a panoply of processes and qualities that could be deemed 'positive', from overarching constructs such as flourishing to more specific concepts like hope.

Of course, none of this was radically new: many of these topics had been studied empirically for years by scholars in disparate fields, and indeed had been debated for centuries, millennia even. However, part of the appeal of the new field was that it created a conceptual space where these diverse topics – all of which shared the 'family resemblance' (à la Wittgenstein) of pertaining to

wellbeing – could be brought together and considered collectively. Thus, as a novel branch of scholarship focused specifically and entirely on 'the science and practice of improving wellbeing' (Lomas et al., 2015, p.1347), it was a welcome new addition to the broader church of psychology.

However, positive psychology was not without its critics. A prominent focus of concern was the very notion underpinning the entire field. Essentially, positive psychology appeared to be promulgating a rather polarising positive-negative dichotomy. Certain phenomena were labelled as positive, and thus presented as inherently desirable. The necessary corollary, of course, is that

contrasting phenomena were implicitly conceptualised as negative, positioned as intrinsically undesirable. So, for example, optimism tended to be valorised as an unmitigated good, and pessimism as a categorical impediment to wellbeing. Some scholars did paint a more nuanced picture; for instance, Seligman (1990, p.292) cautioned that one must be 'able to use pessimism's keen sense of reality when we need it'. However, in terms of the broader discourse of the field, and its cultural impact, a less nuanced binary message held sway.

While seemingly offering an upbeat message – linking positive emotions to beneficial outcomes, such as health (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998) – this valorisation of positivity was problematic for various reasons. Firstly, it often failed to sufficiently appreciate the contextual complexity of emotional outcomes. For instance, 'excessive' optimism can be harmful to wellbeing (e.g. contributing to underappreciation of risk), while pessimism may be beneficial, such as when it prompts proactive coping (Norem, 2001). Of even greater concern was Held's (2002, p.965) suggestion that this emphasis on positivity contributed to a 'tyranny of the positive', to the cultural expectation that one should be upbeat, with social censure for people who could not find the requisite positivity. Similarly, in the work arena, Ehrenreich (2009) accused organisations of compelling forced jollity as a way of hindering dissent and cajoling more out of workers.

Perhaps most perniciously, this 'tyranny' fed into a pervasive cultural discourse in which negative emotional states are not simply seen as undesirable, but pathological. As Horwitz and Wakefield (2007) suggest in *The Loss of Sadness*, dysphoric emotions that were previously regarded as natural and inherent dimensions of the human condition have largely been re-framed as



Positive psychology has tended to promote a somewhat polarising positive-negative dichotomy

Bauman, Z. (2013). *Liquid love: On the frailty of human bonds*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

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disorders, and certainly as problematic. Positive psychology arguably contributed, albeit unwittingly, to this process.

### Blending light and dark

The above critiques could be regarded as undermining positive psychology. However, my colleagues and I take a different view: stimulated by these concerns, we feel the field is responding receptively, evolving into what we describe as 'second wave' positive psychology (SWPP) (Ivtzan et al., 2015; Lomas & Ivtzan, 2015; Wong, 2011). If the 'first wave' is characterised by valorisation of the positive, SWPP recognises that wellbeing actually involves a subtle, dialectical interplay between positive and negative phenomena. This recognition challenges that idea that wellbeing is coterminous with constructs like 'happiness'; rather, it becomes a more expansive term, one that includes negative emotions if these serve some broader sense of 'being/doing well'. For instance, Pollard and Davidson (2001, p.10) define wellbeing as 'a state of successful performance across the life course integrating physical, cognitive and social-emotional function'. One could see how ostensibly negative emotions, like prudent anxiety, could subserve this larger goal. More specifically, SWPP is underpinned by four dialectical principles: appraisal; co-valence; complementarity; and evolution.

The principle of appraisal states that it can be hard to categorise phenomena as either positive or negative, since such appraisals are fundamentally contextually dependent. For instance, as noted above, 'excessive' optimism can lead to miscalculations of risk, whereas pessimism may promote prudence. Prosocial emotions like forgiveness can be harmful if it means one tolerates a situation that one might otherwise resist, such as an abusive relationship; conversely, 'anti-social' emotions like anger can impel one to resist iniquities, and drive progressive social change.

(McNulty & Fincham, 2011).

Even happiness and sadness are not immune from such considerations. Superficial forms of happiness might forestall efforts to pursue deeper states of fulfilment, or tranquillise us into acquiescing to social contexts that ultimately undermine our wellbeing. Conversely, sadness may be thoroughly appropriate, such as in response to loss; it may even have real salutary value, a humane response to suffering perhaps, or a refined aesthetic response to transient beauty. As we dwell on such considerations, clear-cut determinations of 'positive' and 'negative' become harder to make.

It is not just that such appraisals are difficult; the second principle of co-valence reflects the idea that many phenomena comprise positive and negative elements (Lazarus, 2003). This is even so for arguably the most cherished of all human phenomena: love. While there are many forms of love – from the passion of eros to the selflessness of agape – all are a dialectical blend of light and dark. There are many ways of viewing this dialectic, but all are variations on the poignant lamentation of C.S. Lewis (1971): 'To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken.' Thus, even while love contains pleasure, joy and bliss, it also harbours worry, anxiety, and fear. However, this recognition of co-valence leads us inexorably to the third principle: complementarity. The potential dysphoria inherent in love is not an aberration, but the very condition of it. The light and dark of love are inseparable, complementary and co-creating sides of the same coin. Consider that the stronger and more intense one's love for another,

## Meet the author

'When I was offered a lectureship in positive psychology in 2013, it was wonderful to become immersed in this exciting area. But part of me found the field somewhat daunting. It often gave the impression of being so relentlessly upbeat that, if you weren't swept up by this spirit of positivity, you could feel like an outsider. It soon transpired that some other colleagues and students felt something similar.'

As we opened up to these ideas, the field started to feel more real, more human, closer to the ambivalent, fluctuating blend of light and dark that characterises most people's lives. We hope that this second wave of the field will be useful not only to those who are already enjoying the warm sun of positivity, but also to all people, even – or rather, especially – during times of darkness.'



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the greater the risk of heartbreak. As Bauman (2013, p.6) eloquently puts it, 'to love means opening up to that most sublime of all human conditions, one in which fear blends with joy into an alloy that no longer allows its ingredients to separate'.

Finally, the principle of evolution contextualises the very idea of SWPP. Just as SWPP is defined by an appreciation of dialectics, it is itself an example of a dialectical process, in Hegel's sense of thesis-antithesis-synthesis. One might view mainstream psychology, with its apparent concern with 'negative' aspects of human functioning, as the thesis. In critiquing this and embracing ostensibly positive phenomena, positive psychology presented itself as the antithesis. However, critics subsequently discerned flaws in this antithesis. Crucially though, this does

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Scheibe, S., Freund, A.M. & Baltes, P.B.

not necessarily mean an abandonment of positive psychology, a reversion to the original thesis. Rather, the next stage is ideally synthesis, in which the truths of both thesis and antithesis are preserved, while their flaws are overcome. SWPP is just such a synthesis, moving away from a binary classification of phenomena – valorising positivity while condemning negativity – towards a more nuanced appreciation of the dialectical complexities of wellbeing (King, 2001).

### Delving into the nuances

This exploration of the dialectical nuances of flourishing, the delicate interplay of light and dark, can take many forms. One addresses another prominent criticism of positive psychology: that its conceptualisations of wellbeing are rather culturally specific, reflecting the North American context in which the field emerged (Lomas, 2015). While concepts in positive psychology have largely been derived from research with 'WEIRD' participants – Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic (Henrich et al., 2010) – the field has often tended to presume that these findings can be generalised to other cultures. Mindful of these critiques, positive psychology is becoming increasingly appreciative of cultural differences in constructions and experiences of wellbeing.

For my own part, this burgeoning cross-cultural sensitivity has focused on language. More specifically, I have begun to create a lexicography of so-called 'untranslatable words' relating to wellbeing, gathered from across the world's cultures. The general premise of the lexicography is that a culture's values and traditions are encoded in its language, which in turn shapes the experiences and understanding of that culture's members, a perspective broadly referred to as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The more specific premise of the lexicography is that untranslatable words – words for which English purportedly lacks an equivalent term – offer a unique

window onto concepts that may be particular to a given culture (Wierzbicka, 1997). Moreover, I speculate that this lexicography might help people (from all cultures) to develop a richer interior world, and experience and express new dimensions of wellbeing. This claim will require a programme of empirical inquiry to substantiate it.

In starting to build the lexicography, I undertook an analysis of 216 such words (Lomas, 2016). Moreover, through grounded theory analysis, I developed a conceptual 'map' of the terms, thereby expanding the nomological network of concepts within positive psychology. The words were organised into three overarching categories, each of which contained two main themes: feelings (comprising positive and complex feelings); relationships (comprising intimacy and prosociality); and character (comprising personal resources and spirituality). I shall finish here by elucidating this theme of complex feelings, as its words provide a beautiful illustration of the kind of ambivalent constructs that SWPP is concerned with.

Before introducing this theme, there are two general caveats relating to this project. Firstly, it can be difficult to understand a word in isolation without knowing how it relates to other linguistic terms in a system (the great insight of structuralism), or how it is deployed in context. That said, this does not mean that learning foreign words is impossible or valueless if these conditions are not met. Take, for instance, a word like *karma*, which has been adopted into English to refer broadly to causality with respect to ethics. Most English speakers who use this word probably do not know how it relates to other Sanskrit terms, nor its wealth of meanings in the context of Hindu and Buddhist teachings. Nevertheless, such speakers evidently find the word useful, and arguably deploy it in ways that are not completely discordant with its original meanings. Secondly, the definitions in this lexicography are neither complete nor final and canonical.

For a start, words are polysemous; as such, each of these words would ideally have its own entire article, delving into its multidimensional nuances. Moreover, while the explications here are based on definitions offered by dictionaries and scholars, my interpretations are inevitably subjective and partial (particularly since I'm from a WEIRD society myself!).

However, I'm hoping that this lexicography will evolve with the help of scholars throughout the world, who may be able to add to and refine it in a spirit of collaboration. Indeed, a webpage has been set up for this purpose: [www.drtimlomas.com/](http://www.drtimlomas.com/)

lexicography. With that in mind, we turn to the words themselves.

### From *Wanderlust* to *yugen*

The theme of complex feelings contains concepts and processes that are beautifully ambivalent and co-valenced, and are thus emblematic of SWPP, reflecting the dialectical nature of flourishing. These are not all words for feelings *per se*, but include terms that either: (a) relate in some way to complex feelings; or (b) embody a dialectical mode of appreciation. Regarding the latter, arguably the exemplary concept in this respect is the Chinese notion of *yin-yang* (陰陽), associated with Taoism. Separately, *yin* means cloudy/overcast, and *yang* 'in the sun' (shone upon). Together, they imply the two sides of a mountain (one sunlit, one in shadow), and thus articulate the idea of 'holistic duality', i.e. that reality comprises co-dependent opposites. This notion is an overarching motif for this entire class of terms: in their various ways, the words here are a dialectical blend of positive and negative, light and dark, together creating a rich and complex sensibility.

Within this overall theme are a number of subthemes. The first is an evocation of hope and anticipation. Words here are truly co-valenced, a tantalising blend of savouring the future, combined with fear that it will not come

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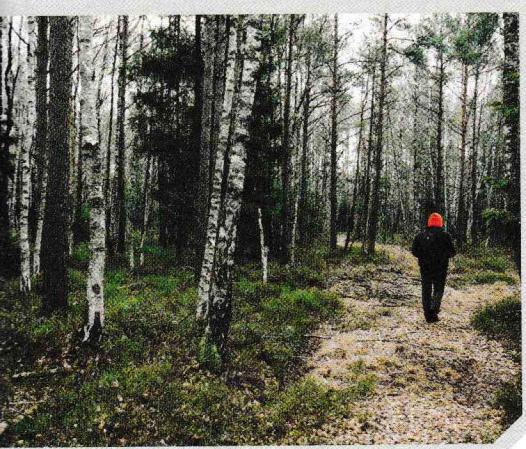
Tanizaki, J. (2001). *In Praise of Shadows*. New York: Random House. (Original work published 1933)

Uchida, Y. & Ogihara, Y. (2012). Personal or interpersonal construal of happiness: A cultural psychological perspective. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 2(4), 354–369.

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### Waldeinsamkeit

to pass. In Italian, *magari* – both an adverb and an interjection – roughly means ‘maybe,’ but also encompasses ‘in my dreams’ and ‘if only,’ encapsulating both a hopeful wish and wistful regret. Similarly, in Indonesian, the auxiliary verb *belum* means ‘not yet,’ but with an optimism that an event might yet happen. In German, *Vorfreude* is an intense, joyful anticipation derived from imagining future pleasures. Rather more melancholic is the Korean *han* (한), a culturally vital term expressing sorrow and regret, yet also embodying a quiet patience, hoping that whatever adversity is causing the sadness will eventually be righted.

Related to *han* are words pertaining to longing and yearning that are at the heart of their respective cultures (Silva, 2012; Wierzbicka, 1997). In Portuguese, *saudade* is a melancholic longing or nostalgia for a person, place or thing that is far away, either spatially or in time; indeed, as Silva points out, it can reflect a vague wistfulness for phenomena that may not even exist, like a better future. Similarly, the German *Sehnsucht* translates as ‘life longings,’ and captures an ‘intense desire for alternative states and realizations of life,’ even (or especially) if these are unlikely to be attained (Scheibe et al., 2007, p.778). *Toska* in Russian and *hiraeth* in Welsh articulate a complex mix of nostalgia, wistfulness and longing for one’s homeland. Likewise, in Japanese, *natsukashii* (懐かしい) is a nostalgic longing for the past, featuring a delicate blend of happiness for fond memories, yet sadness that those times are no longer.

Related to words articulating longing are terms expressing desire for freedom. In German, *Fernweh* is described by Gabriel (2004, p.155) as the ‘call of faraway places,’ or homesickness for a place one has never been to. Here too is the well-known *Wanderlust*, a wonderful

example of a foreign term that has been adopted into English, arguably because it fulfilled some unmet need. Indeed, as De Boinod (2007, p.5) says ‘[t]he English language has a long-established and voracious tendency to naturalize the best foreign words.’ In Russian, *prostor* captures a desire for spaciousness, roaming free in limitless expanse, not only physically, but creatively and spiritually (Pesmen, 2000). Finally, the strange German term *Waldeinsamkeit* articulates the feeling of solitude when alone in the woods, a mysterious state described by (Schwartz, 2007, p.201) as the ‘pseudo-magical pull of the untamed wilderness; a place of living nightmares caught between the dreamscape and Fairyland’.

Finally, there are words capturing complex aesthetic states, evoked through contemplation of the transient mysteries of life. Japanese is particularly rich in these terms, possibly because Japanese culture has traditionally been steeped in dialectical models of cognition and appreciation (Uchida & Ogihara, 2012). With these concepts, it feels like we are at the very heart of SWPP, so I shall end by dwelling on these in a little more depth.

The first term of interest is *aware* (哀れ). This expresses the bittersweetness of a brief, fading moment of transcendent beauty, while the compound *mono no aware* (物の哀れ) articulates the pathos of understanding that the world and its beauty are transient in this way. As expressed by Yoshida Kenkō (1283–1350), ‘If man were never to fade away like the dews of Adashino... how things would lose their power to move us! The most precious thing in life is its uncertainty’ (cited in Keene, 1967, p.7). In Zen – a Buddhist tradition nearly synonymous with Japanese culture – the pre-eminent symbol of *mono no aware* is the cherry blossom, whose fragile efflorescence captivates attention during the bloom of spring. Crucially, appreciation of its beauty is heightened by awareness of its transience. Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694), arguably the greatest master of the haiku, captured this sense with particular genius: ‘Summer grasses –; the only remains; of warriors’ dreams.’ Thus, as Prusinski (2013, p.23) says, ‘the beauty lies not in the object itself, but in the whole experience, transformation, and span of time in which the object is present and changing’.

A second term at the heart of Japanese aesthetics is *wabi-sabi*, an intriguing counterbalance to the ephemerality of *mono no aware*: *wabi* (侘) refers to

imperfect beauty, and *sabi* (寂) to aged beauty. Whereas *mono no aware* points towards erosion, *wabi-sabi* reminds us that in this process of changing, a certain dignity is nonetheless retained. Think of the mysterious power of old ruins, and the reverential qualities of depth and meaning they can evoke. This sense is depicted by Tanizaki (1933/2001, pp.11–12) in his classic exposition of Zen aesthetics *In Praise of Shadows*. He describes preferring a ‘pensive lustre to a shallow brilliance, a murky light that, whether in a stone or an artifact, bespeaks a sheen of antiquity... We love things that bear the marks of grime, soot, and weather, and we love the colors and the sheen that call to mind the past that made them.’

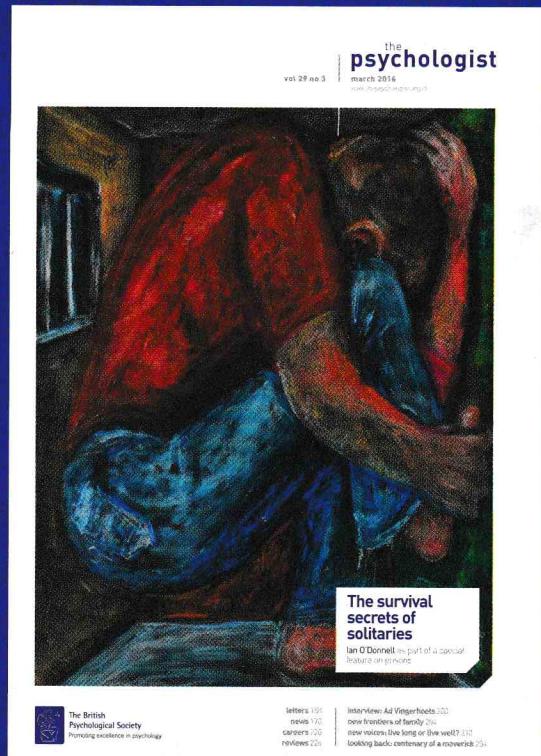
Finally, we have *yugen* (幽玄), described by Suzuki (1959/1973, pp.220–221) as evoking obscurity, mystery, unknowability, and yet not ‘utter darkness’. It reflects the notion that the elusive mysteries of existence may nevertheless be sensed in some inchoate, intuitive way. Moreover, *yugen* does not simply depict awareness of these strange depths, but the sense that one is moved to one’s core by these mysteries, without quite knowing why. The 13th-century Japanese poet Kamo no Chōmei characterises *yugen* thus: ‘It is like an autumn evening under a colorless expanse of silent sky. Somehow, as if for some reason that we should be able to recall, tears well uncontrollably’ (cited in Dyrness and Kärkkäinen, 2008, p.65).

Western psychology arguably has constructs that are similar to *yugen*, like the profound state of elevation Maslow (1972) labelled ‘peak experiences’. These go far beyond mere hedonic pleasure or even fulfilment, involving qualities like awe and self-transcendence. However, what is especially unusual and potent about *yugen* is the apparently ‘ordinary’ nature of the phenomena that can evoke it. This is reflected in this haiku by Bashō, often regarded as the ultimate expression of *yugen* (Watts, 1957): ‘On a withered branch; A crow is perched; In the autumn evening.’ Conceptualisations of peak experiences tend to imply that these can only be experienced on some literal or metaphorical (e.g. developmental) summit. With *yugen* though, there is the profound experience of the ordinary – which is within everyone’s reach – being revealed as extraordinary, as if lifting a veil on the sacred. *Yugen* is thus an apposite place to finish here, a perfect example of how untranslatable words can usher us into new dialectical modes of appreciation, and reveal hitherto hidden dimensions of flourishing.



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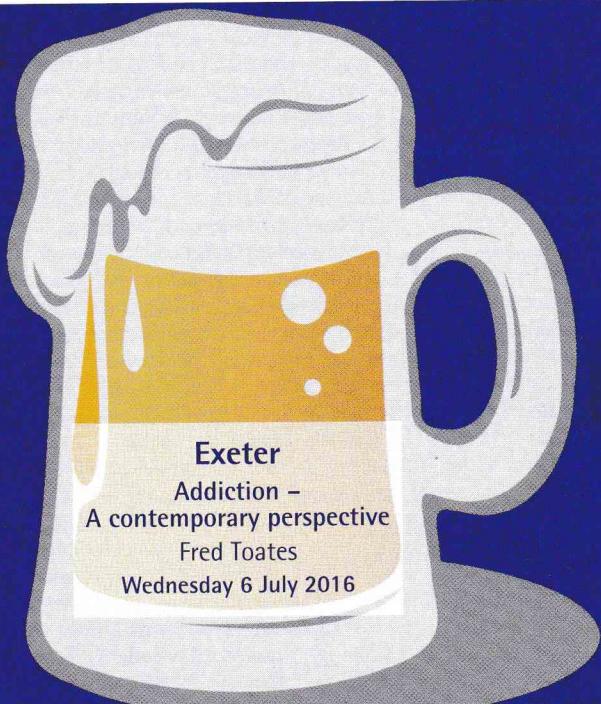


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# The knowing nose

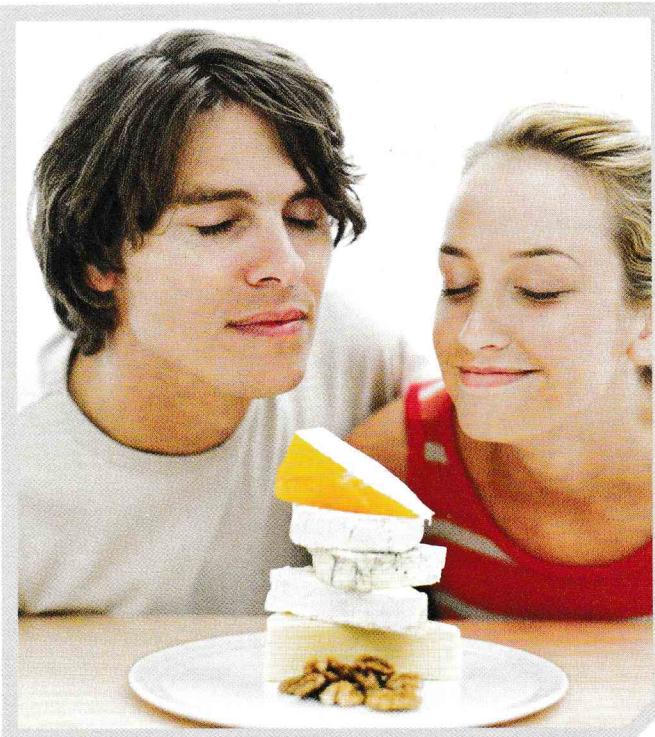
Laura J. Speed on how olfactory studies can inform theories of language and perception

We live in a loud and colourful world, with our visual and auditory systems bombarded with information. But what of the lower sense of smell? Can we learn anything by studying olfaction?

Think about your experience with vision. Viewing a beautiful scene we can pick out various features, identify colours, we can describe the scene in detail, and later recall the scene vividly in memory. We can even create an image of a comparable scene easily by using visual imagery. These feats seem easy and have been thoroughly researched and theorised in the psychological literature. But here I would like to argue that by focusing on the dominant sense of vision, our picture of language and perception might be skewed.

Finding relevant literature on 'language and perception' doesn't take long, with Google Scholar retrieving almost three million articles. But what proportion of these papers discuss senses other than the dominant vision? I expect very few. 'Perception' is often conflated with 'vision'. Even in the first pages of the influential book *Language and Perception*, the authors, George Miller and

Philip Johnson-Laird (1976), make the slip of referring to perception as 'what is seen'. Of course, vision is our most reliable sense for orienting in the world, providing fine-grained spatial information. Similarly, audition is extremely important for temporal



Odour perceptions and judgements can easily be shaped by verbal labels and visual information

information. Further, both perceptual modalities are integral to communication – speaking, listening, reading and writing – making their salience in the conception of 'perception' obvious. However, we don't experience the world in only the visual and auditory modalities, so understanding how we perceive, conceptualise and talk about the other senses is important. Any differences to vision and audition could reveal interesting facts about human cognition. Here I focus on the olfactory modality, which could be considered most distinct from the dominant senses for a number of reasons, as we shall see.

## Talking about odours

We find it pretty easy to describe a painting to someone, the outfit your colleague wore yesterday or your new favourite song. It would appear that our language system works very effectively with our perceptual systems. Early psycholinguists proposed that knowledge acquired through vision and knowledge acquired through linguistic input were represented similarly, making talking about vision easy. Consistent with this idea, spatial representations acquired from vision and spatial representations acquired from language have been shown to be comparable. Avraamides et al. (2004) had participants learn spatial layouts through visual perception or spatial descriptions and later make direction and distance judgements about the spatial representations. Results showed that participants performed similarly in both visual and linguistic conditions.

Evidence for the strong link between language and

Alloppenna, P.D., Magnuson, J.S. & Tanenhaus, M.K. (1998). Tracking the time course of spoken word recognition using eye movements: Evidence for continuous mapping models. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 38, 419–439.

Arshamian, A., Iannilli, E., Gerber, J.C. et al. (2013). The functional neuroanatomy of odor evoked autobiographical memories cued by odors and words. *Neuropsychologia*, 51(1), 123–131.

Avraamides, M.N., Loomis, J.M., Klatzky, R.L. & Golledge, R.G. (2004). Functional equivalence of spatial representations derived from vision and language: Evidence from allocentric judgments. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 30(4), 801.

Cain, W.S. (1979). To know with the nose: Keys to odor identification. *Science*, 203, 467–470.

Cain, W.S. & Polak, E.H. (1992). Olfactory adaptation as an aspect of odor similarity. *Chemical Senses*, 17(5), 481–491.

Chu, S. & Downes, J.J. (2002). Proust nose best: Odors are better cues of autobiographical memory. *Memory & Cognition*, 30(4), 511–518.

Croijmans, I. & Majid, A. (2016). Not all flavor expertise is equal: The language of wine and coffee experts. *PLoS ONE*, e0155845.

de Araujo, I.E., Rolls, E.T., Velazco, M. et al. (2005). Cognitive modulation of olfactory processing. *Neuron*, 46, 671–679.

de Wijk, R.A. & Cain, W.S. (1994). Odor quality: Discrimination versus free and cued identification. *Perception & Psychophysics*, 56(1), 12–18.

vision has also been demonstrated using eye tracking and what is known as the 'visual-world paradigm'. Here, eye movements around visual scenes are closely time-locked to linguistic input, and fixations to objects in a scene can provide a fine-grained measure of lexical access (Alloppenna et al., 1998). For example, upon hearing a sentence such as 'Pick up the beaker...' eye movements towards a visually present beaker, and to a phonological competitor beetle, begin to increase from the onset of 'beaker' showing that both 'beaker' and 'beetle' are lexically retrieved.

For odours however, the connection between language and perception is much weaker. In Western societies people seldom talk about odours. But when they do, they are often incorrect in their descriptions. People can correctly name an odour (in terms of the source object of the odour) only around 50 per cent of the time (e.g. Cain, 1979), even common everyday odours like coffee and peanut butter. This deficiency in naming is quite shocking when compared with the ease of naming visual objects. Imagine only being able to name half of the colours of the rainbow! Naming odours becomes much easier when a list of label alternatives is given (de Wijk & Cain, 1994). Research suggests that words with strong olfactory associations (such as cinnamon) can activate primary olfactory cortex (Gonzalez et al., 2006), implying that an odour word could provide an olfactory template to which the odour can be matched. It seems possible then that the weak link between odour and language is unidirectional: we find it difficult to retrieve words when given an odour, but words are reliable cues for odour information.

Talking about what we see, we have at our disposal 'a stable world of objects, regions, motions, distances, gradients, directions, events' (Miller & Johnson-Laird, 1976), but on what dimensions do we conceptualise our olfactory world? What are the contents of our subjective perceptual experiences of odour?

Compared to vision, olfaction is more 'ineffable' (Levinson & Majid, 2014) – olfactory experiences are more difficult to put into words. In English, and other languages spoken in the West, there are very few words that exist to talk only about odours. We can say something is 'stinky' or 'fragrant', but it's hard to find specific odour words that give you any more information about an odour other than its pleasantness. This is of course important, and it is thought that pleasantness is the main dimension by which odours are perceived (Yeshurun & Sobel, 2010), but it really limits the number of ways in which we can talk about odours. Many people instead resort to talking about the odour source, for example 'it smells like banana', 'it smells fruity', which consequently activates other conceptual associations with that object, like shape and colour. It seems then that in language, odours rarely enjoy the spotlight alone.

### Perceiving and judging odours

It has been suggested that because of the limitations in thinking and talking about odours, odour perceptions and judgements can easily be shaped by verbal labels and visual information. Herz (2003) argues that olfaction should be influenced by language more than other perceptual modalities are because we cannot see odours, we cannot easily spatially locate them, nor can we easily identify them. So, instead we search for any other information in the environment (such as language) to inform odour perception. Giving an odour a name (de Wijk & Cain, 1994) has been shown to aid in odour discrimination (determining

## Meet the author

'For many years I have been fascinated in "embodied cognition", specifically how the body and the senses can be involved in language understanding. Research assessing the relationship between language and vision in this area has been abundant, and includes exciting findings about how language can affect visual perception and vice versa. But the area of language and olfaction has been relatively ignored. Yet odour is a powerful and emotional sense. The single sniff of a fragrance can transport you to a distant but vivid memory. A smell can be enough for you to decide to stay or leave a room, eat a meal or not, or whether or not to go on a second date. Because of the strength of odours, and the ways in which olfaction differs from the dominant senses, a theory of language and perception without olfaction is incomplete. My journey with olfaction has been extremely exciting so far, challenging my previous views and informing me about the capabilities of language and perception.'



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whether two odours are the same or different). Language can also change the perceptual interpretation of an odour. Simply labelling the same odour as 'cheese' versus 'body odour' can lead to differences in pleasantness judgements (de Araujo et al., 2005). Similarly, Zellner et al. (2008) found explicitly labelling unisex fragrances as male (or female) made participants perceive the fragrance as more masculine (or feminine). These effects have been described as 'olfactory illusions' (Herz, 2003).

How does this compare with the effect of language on vision? A wealth of research has provided evidence that language can affect visual perception. For

Engen, T. & Ross, B.M. [1973]. Long-term memory of odors with and without verbal descriptions. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 100(2), 221–227.

Gilbert, A.L., Regier, T., Kay, P. & Ivry, R.B. [2006]. Whorf hypothesis is supported in the right visual field but not the left. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 103, 489–494.

González, J., Barros-Loscertales, A., Pulvermüller, F. et al. [2006]. Reading cinnamon activates olfactory brain regions. *NeuroImage*, 32(2), 906–912.

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Grill-Spector, K. & Malach, R. [2004]. The human visual cortex. *Annual Review*

*of Neuroscience*, 27(1), 649–677.

Herz, R.S. [2003]. The effect of verbal context on olfactory perception. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 132(4), 595–606.

Levinson, S.C. & Majid, A. [2014]. Differential Ineffability and the Senses. *Mind & Language*, 29(4), 407–427.

Lupyan, G. & Spivey, M.J. [2008]. Perceptual processing is facilitated

by ascribing meaning to novel stimuli. *Current Biology*, 18, R410–R4120

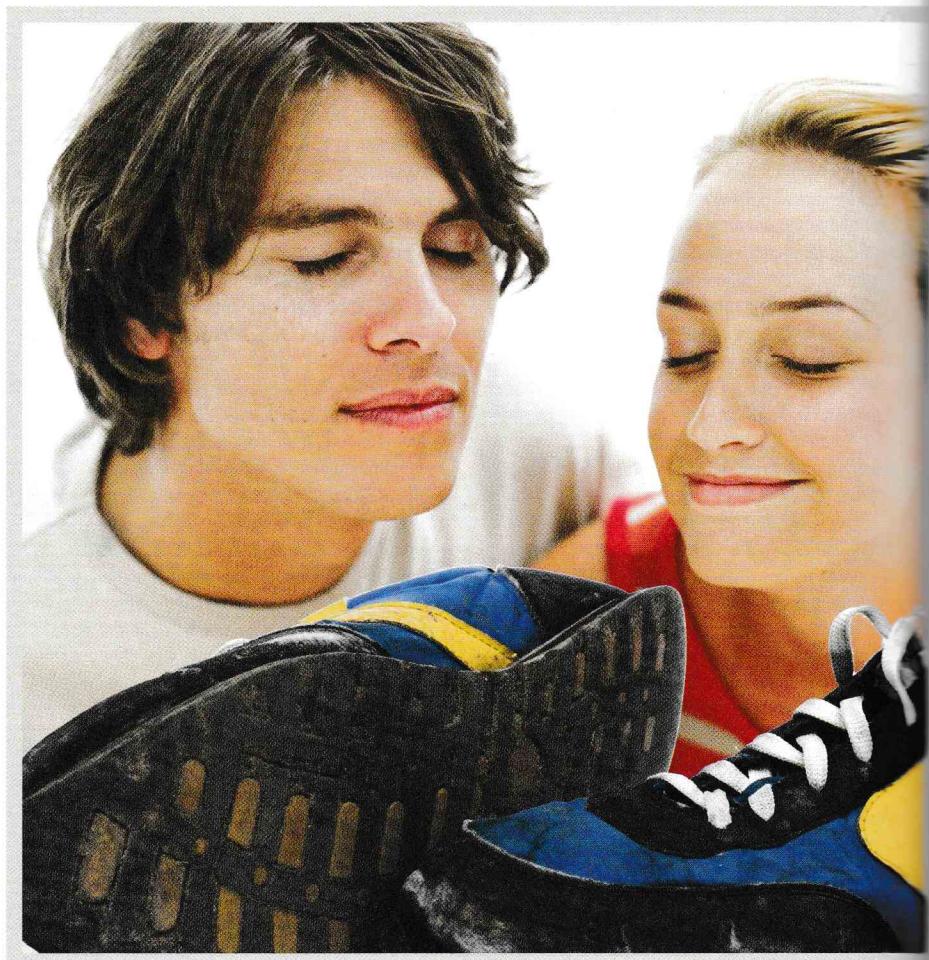
Lupyan, G. & Ward, E.J. [2013]. Language can boost otherwise unseen objects into visual awareness. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 110, 14196–14201

Majid, A. [2015]. Cultural factors shape olfactory language. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 19(11), 629–630.

example, we are faster to discriminate between colours or shapes when they have different names. Gilbert et al. (2006) found that discriminating a colour target from distractors was easier when the distractors had a different colour name (e.g. blue target with green distractors) than when they were the same (e.g. green target with green distractors), even though the colour distance between target and distractor was fixed (i.e. the two conditions were perceptually matched). Similarly, Lupyan and Spivey (2008) found that visual search for a target among distractors was easier when the objects were labelled as '2s' and '5s', compared to having no verbal labels.

Thus language appears able to facilitate visual processing. But can language actually change the perceived identity of a visual object as it can for odours? We all know the visual illusion Rubin's vase, in which at one moment two faces are visually perceived, the next moment a vase. In this illusion we can control which interpretation we see by thinking of each particular concept. There are also more recent demonstrations of 'changing what we see', such as Lupyan and Ward (2013), who showed that language can bring object perception into conscious awareness. Participants' visual awareness of familiar objects was suppressed by using a method called continuous flash suppression. In this method, an image of an object is presented to one eye while a visual masking pattern is sent to the other, leading to overall perception of visual noise. When a verbal label was given matching the 'suppressed' object, participants were more likely to detect the object (Lupyan & Ward, 2013). Thus language effectively changed the perception of visual noise to the perception of an object.

Although, on the surface, effects of language on visual perception and effects of language on odour perception appear comparable, there are differences. In the odour studies described above (e.g. Zellner et al., 2008), the odours used



It could be argued that odours themselves are generally more ambiguous at the outset

were not perceptually manipulated, but presented in their standard form. For vision however, the effect of a label on visual identity occurs specifically when the visual object was designed to be ambiguous or distorted – language affects visual interpretation when perception is most difficult. The threshold for an effect of language on perception therefore may be lower for olfaction. However, it could be argued that odours themselves are generally more ambiguous at the outset.

### Odour and the brain

The visual cortex has been extensively mapped, with more than a dozen putative

visual areas identified with brain imaging (e.g. Tootell et al., 1996). Many visual areas are mapped retinotopically, with cortical organisation reflecting real-world spatial information. Moving from the primary visual cortex V1 up to visual motion processing MT, visual areas have been characterised with specific functions that determine features of visual input at various grains of information, gradually increasing in complexity (see Grill-Spector & Malach (2004) for a review).

The currently known facts about the olfactory cortex are less enlightening. There is indication that the primary olfactory cortex has subregions responding differentially to odour

Majid, A. & Burenhult, N. (2014). Odors are expressible in language, as long as you speak the right language. *Cognition*, 130(2), 266–270.

Miller, G. & Johnson-Laird (1976). *Language and perception*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

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San Roque, L., Kendrick, K.H., Norcliffe, E.J. et al. (2015). Vision verbs dominate in conversation across cultures, but the ranking of non-visual verbs varies. *Cognitive Linguistics*, 26, 31–60.

Soudry, Y., Lemogne, C., Malinvaud, D. et al. (2011). Olfactory system and emotion: Common substrates.

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Tootell R.B., Dale, A.M., Sereno, M.I. & Malach, R. (1996). New images from human visual cortex. *Trends in Neurosciences*, 19, 481–489.

Weber, S.T. & Heuberger, E. (2008). The impact of natural odors on affective states in humans. *Chemical Senses*, 33(5), 441–447.

Wnuk, E. & Majid, A. (2014). Revisiting the limits of language. *Cognition*, 131(1), 125–138.

Yeshurun, Y. & Sobel, N. (2010). An odor is not worth a thousand words: From multidimensional odors to unidimensional odor objects. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 61, 219–241.

Zald, D.H. & Pardo, J.V. (1997). Emotion, olfaction, and the human amygdala: Amygdala activation during aversive

hedonics (i.e. pleasant versus unpleasant odours) (Zald & Pardo, 1997) and that different regions process odour quality (identity) versus odour structure (Gottfried et al., 2006), but the organisation of the olfactory cortex has not been mapped in a topographical manner comparable to vision. In fact, it has been suggested that odours may be processed holistically rather than by individual components (Engen & Ross, 1973). Mapping the organisation of the primary olfactory cortex becomes more problematic because structurally related odours may smell different but structurally distinct odours may smell similar (Cain & Polak, 1992). This suggests that the relationship between odour sensation and odour perception is unpredictable (Gottfried et al., 2006).

There are further characteristics that differentiate olfactory perception and language from vision. First, the location of the olfactory cortex is significant. The olfactory cortex is located very close to the limbic system, being well connected with emotion and memory systems (Soudry et al., 2011). This proximity to emotion and memory can lead individuals to have strong emotional reactions to odours (e.g. Weber & Heuberger, 2008), and odours can be powerful triggers of autobiographical memories (e.g. Chu & Downes, 2002), with memories more emotional (Arshamian et al., 2013) than autobiographical memories cued by other modalities. Whereas visual objects are easily

integrated with semantic information, information integral to word meaning (Olofsson & Gottfried, 2015), odour objects are instead endowed with emotion and memories.

Another important fact about the organisation of the olfactory system concerns its connections with the brain's language system. Odour and language are said to be 'poorly connected' (Olofsson & Gottfried, 2015). At a neural level, the olfactory cortex is more 'directly' connected with language regions of the brain: the integration of linguistic and olfactory information occurs at only the third synapse from the receptor neuron. But this means that, in comparison to visual information that has been processed at multiple cortical and subcortical levels, odour information is less processed and more coarse by the time it reaches linguistic information (Olofsson & Gottfried, 2015). It is therefore much less elaborated than visual information, which subsequently makes word finding more difficult. Since olfactory information is received at a coarse grain, it is more likely that broad categories are activated for naming (e.g. fruit) rather than a specific odour quality or source term (e.g. lemon).

"Jahai speakers could name odours just as easily as colours"

contains a number of specific abstract smell terms, comparable to colour terms (e.g. red, blue) in that they don't refer to specific odour sources (e.g. lemon, cinnamon) but abstract across a number of odours (see also Wnuk and Majid, 2014, for similar finding in the Maniq language). The term *cr̄es*, for example, is used for odours with a 'stinging' smell, such as petrol, smoke and bat droppings. Thus, speakers of the language are better equipped to talk about smell than speakers of Western languages, who have few terms to specifically describe an odour. For people in the Jahai culture, odour is an integral part of their daily lives, featuring in their cultural practices and ideals. This raises the question to what extent experience and cultural practices can affect language and perception. In line with this, evidence from experts (e.g. wine-tasters) suggests that odour naming can be shaped with relevant experience (Croijmans & Majid, 2016).

### Why study olfaction?

So what can olfaction tell us about language and perception overall? Since olfaction is a less dominant modality in everyday interactions, it can reveal how language and perceptual processes differ for a more neglected modality. Is the frequency of use and utility of olfaction and vision reflected in the way these modalities are talked about and their vulnerability to linguistic influence? Perhaps olfactory language and perception is merely 'good enough' for what olfaction is needed for. By integrating findings from the olfactory domain into theories of language and perception we can reveal overall mechanisms. Further, predictions can be made between language-perception effects and depth of cortical analysis – vision may be more easily talked about and more resilient to linguistic influence because it is processed at a more fine-grained featural level. Cortical and subcortical connections may also play significant roles in language and perception, with odours more amenable to memory or emotional information, and vision instead to semantic associations. Finally, looking at cross-linguistic differences and differences in cultural practices can further elucidate the experiential factors that can shape olfactory and visual cognition. Overall, finding similarities and differences across perceptual modalities can 'tell us something fundamental about constraints on how consciousness and reasoning can patrol our inner lives' (Levinson & Majid, 2014).

olfactory stimulation. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 94(8), 4119–4124.

Zellner, D.A., McGarry, A., Mattern-McClory, R. & Abreu, D. (2008).

Masculinity/femininity of fine fragrances affects color-odor correspondences: A case for cognitions influencing cross-modal correspondences. *Chemical Senses*, 33(2), 211–222.



The British  
Psychological Society  
Ethics Committee

## AWARD FOR PROMOTING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY 2016

The Ethics Committee is delighted to invite members of the Society to submit nominations for the Society's Award for Promoting Equality of Opportunity. This award recognises a person whose work as a psychologist – teacher, researcher or practitioner – has made a significant contribution to challenging social inequalities in the UK in relation to gender, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, disability or age. The recipient is invited to deliver the Award lecture at the Annual Conference and to accept a commemorative certificate, which is presented at the Award Ceremony during the Society's Annual Conference.

Nominations should include a completed nomination form providing evidence of some or all of the following:

- personal commitment to equality issues;
- impact of the candidate's contributions to psychological teaching, research or practice (inclusive of published works and influence on professional practice);
- impact of the candidate's work on other professionals/service providers;
- impact of the candidate's work directly for people from marginalised and oppressed social groups.

A copy of the candidate's up to date curriculum vitae should also be included. Guidance for assessors and the nomination form can be obtained from [emma.smith@bps.org.uk](mailto:emma.smith@bps.org.uk).

The deadline for nominations is **19 September 2016**. No award will be made in the absence of a candidate of sufficient merit.



The British  
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Professional Practice Board

## Practitioner of the Year Award

The Professional Practice Board invites nominations for this annual award to recognise, promote and reward good practice undertaken by Chartered members of the Society in the preceding 12 months.

It is anticipated that this award will be made to a psychologist early in their career.

### Award

The award will confer a commemorative certificate which will be presented to the recipient at an appropriate Society conference.

### Criteria

The Practitioner of the Year Award is open to practitioners who are Chartered Psychologists in any area of professional applied psychology. A nomination will only be accepted for named individual(s) or for a body of work where the contributions of those Chartered Psychologists involved can be clearly shown. Self-nominations and third-party nominations (including colleagues, employers and clients etc.) will be accepted. It is not limited to residents of the UK. The award will not be made to psychologists whose main area of work is within an academic department.

Nominations should be sent to the Chair of the Professional Practice Board at the Society's office to arrive no later than **Thursday 1 December 2016**.

Full details from Carl Bourton at the Society's Leicester office (e-mail: [carl.bourton@bps.org.uk](mailto:carl.bourton@bps.org.uk))



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# Teenagers in love

Susan Moore considers the research and what it means for effective parenting

The singer of a plaintive hit song from the 1950s croons 'Each night I ask the stars up above, Why must I be a teenager in love?', as he bemoans the ups and downs of his romance, one minute on top of the world, next minute in the deepest slough of despondency. Such angst!

Has anything changed? In modern pop songs, young people still sing about their crushes, unrequited loves and romantic break-ups; about feeling awkward, unsure, in despair, overwhelmed, joyous and inspired, although these days the sexual imagery is much more obvious. And it can appear that the tender feelings of first love are at odds with today's world of 'out there' sexuality. Adolescents are heavy consumers of online pornography, they are sexting, and using 'apps' to meet partners for casual sex hook-ups. They may post on Facebook about their sexual and romantic successes and failures. Research has not yet caught up with the long-term implications of these new ways of courting, but it does seem that falling in love and romantic relationships are still part of the developmental timetable for many adolescents.

Let's look at what is

known. The US-based National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), involving a representative sample of thousands of school children in Grades 7 to 12, found that over 80 per cent of those aged 14 years and older were or had been in a romantic relationship, including a small number (2-3 per cent) in same-sex relationships (Carver et al., 2003; Grieger et al., 2014). Many of these relationships were short term, especially among younger adolescents, but a significant number were a year or more in duration. Evidence that these relationships were socially normative was shown by the finding that in most cases, parents had met their child's romantic partner and the couples had told others of their romantic status. There is limited data on romantic relationships in other developed

countries, but existing research suggests similar percentages to the US data, although with somewhat older age groups (e.g. Moore et al., 2012).

The normative nature of adolescent romantic relationships means that those young people without a girlfriend or boyfriend can feel stressed or 'different' (Scanlan et al., 2012).

Given that adolescence is a time when there is a great deal of pressure to conform to peer norms, young people who are not linking up romantically can feel lonely and out of step with their peers. For example, on the internet site [girlsaskguys.com](http://girlsaskguys.com), an anonymous young woman asks:

I've never had a boyfriend or girlfriend. Would you assume that there is something bad or wrong with that person that makes people not want to go out with them? I think it's because I am ugly. I am not fat however. What is wrong with me?

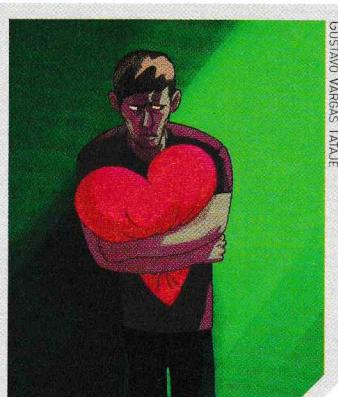
On a different advice site ([quora.com](http://quora.com)), this young man similarly questions why he is different:

I am 21 and never had a girlfriend. Most of my friends are in a relationship. I feel kind of depressed and that I would never have a girlfriend. What should I do? I've asked a couple of girls whom I like to go out with me in the past and they declined.

Of course, not every young person is interested in romantic relationships. Some feel they are not ready, some want to concentrate on their studies or sport, others are more tempted by the casual sex culture of temporary 'hook-ups'. Nevertheless, most adolescents begin their sexual lives within the context of a romantic relationship and generally, involvement in romantic relationships in adolescence is developmentally appropriate and healthy (Collins et al., 2009).

## What happens when teenagers fall in love?

Falling in love is an emotional upheaval at any age, but for adolescents the feelings are likely to be even more difficult to manage. Teenage bodies and brains are maturing at a rate not experienced since infancy. There is a growth spurt, development of secondary sex



Braams, B.R., van Duijvenvoorde, A.C.K., Peper, J.S. & Crone, E.A. (2015). Longitudinal changes in adolescent risk-taking. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 35, 7226-7238.

Brand, S., Luethi, M., von Planta, A. et al. (2007). Romantic love, hypomania, and sleep pattern in adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 41(1), 69-76.

Buchanan, C.M., Eccles, J.S. & Becker, J.B. (1992). Are adolescents the victims of raging hormones: Evidence for activational effects of hormones on moods and behavior at adolescence. *Psychological Bulletin*, 111(1), 62-107.

Carver, K., Joyner, K. & Udry, J.R. (2003). National estimates of adolescent romantic relationships. In P. Florsheim (Ed.) *Adolescent romantic relations and sexual behavior: Theory, research and practical implications* (pp.23-56). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Collins, W.A., Welsh, D.P. & Furman, W. (2009). Adolescent romantic relationships. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60, 631.

Connolly, J. & McIsaac, C. (2009). Adolescents' explanations for romantic dissolutions: A developmental perspective. *Journal of Adolescence*, 32(5), 1209-1223.

Davila, J. (2008). Depressive symptoms and adolescent romance. *Child Development and Personality*, 2(1), 26-31.

Erikson, E. (1968). *Identity, youth and crisis*. New York: Norton.

Fisher, H.E., Aron, A. & Brown, L.L. (2006). Romantic love: A mammalian brain system for mate choice. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, 361, 2057-2062.

characteristics and young people change in appearance from child to adult. Physical awkwardness often results from growth asynchronies; young people can feel embarrassed and self-conscious about the sexualisation of their bodies or their perceived inadequacies in terms of often-unrealistic body ideals. As well, the adolescent brain has been described as 'a work in progress', with certain areas maturing more quickly than others, leading to potential mismatches between physical, emotional and cognitive development. For example, there can be incongruities between adult bodily appearance, increasing sex drive and the brain development required for mature decision-making and self-regulation of behaviour and emotions. The 'executive functioning' area of the brain – the prefrontal cortex – is among the last areas of the brain to fully mature, usually sometime in the twenties (Petanjek et al., 2011). Adolescence therefore becomes a time of diminished prefrontal cortical control, with the heightened possibility of risk-taking and poor judgement decisions, especially in environments described as 'reward-sensitive', where the temptations of immediate feel-good experiences are high, such as in romantic and sexual situations (Braams et al., 2015; Suleiman & Harden, 2016).

Hormonal changes, triggered by brain and body developments, are strongly implicated in the intense feelings of sexual attraction and falling in love. Testosterone and oestrogen – male and female sex hormones – are associated with heightened sexual urges, while the hormones oxytocin and vasopressin are implicated in attachment and bonding. During puberty, the volume of these circulating sex hormones in the body rises dramatically. In girls, the ovaries increase their production of oestrogen sixfold and in boys, the testes produce 20 times the amount of testosterone. Both sexes have male and female hormones circulating in the bloodstream, but during adolescence a boy's testosterone level becomes 20 to 60 per

cent higher than that of a girl, while her oestrogen level becomes 20 to 30 per cent higher than his. These hormones have strong effects on mood and libido. Young people are hormonally 'primed' toward being sexually attracted to others but, especially in early adolescence, they are not used to the feelings associated with the rapid increases and fluctuations in their hormone levels. High concentrations of certain hormones for one's age, or rapid fluctuations of hormone levels may trigger more negative moods and greater mood variability (Buchanan et al., 1992). Emotions associated with being 'in love' or 'in lust' are likely to be confused and confusing, even overwhelming for some (Temple-Smith et al., 2016).

It's not only the sex hormones that are involved in falling in love. Ortigue and his colleagues (2010) used brain imaging to show that when a person falls in love, 12 areas of the brain work in tandem to release euphoria-inducing chemicals such as dopamine, adrenaline and serotonin.

Adrenaline is a stress hormone, causing sweating, heart palpitations and dry mouth – just catching a glimpse of the new love can trigger these bodily sensations. Dopamine stimulates desire and pleasurable feelings, and has been described as a 'feel good' hormone with similar effects to the drug cocaine. Fisher et al. (2006) found heightened levels of dopamine in the brains of couples newly in love. Further, Marazziti and Canale (2004) examined levels of serotonin in the bloodstreams of couples in love and people with obsessive-compulsive disorders. Their finding that levels were similarly heightened in the two groups

## Meet the author

'It's a long time since my own adolescence, but like so many people I will never forget the heady emotions of first love, the embarrassing things I did and the mistakes I made. The world has changed greatly since "my time", but from over 40 years of research into the adolescent experience (as well as being a mother, step-mother and grandmother to adolescents) I can see that much remains the same. There is more freedom and tolerance of youthful romantic and sexual experimentation, but the risks of poor decision-making persist. Some of these are new, like being the victim of a sexual predator or experiencing "revenge porn" on the internet. Some are as old as history, like regretted sex or unplanned pregnancy. Parents, teachers and counsellors of young people can offer more effective support if they become familiar with the latest research on adolescent romance, including the role of brain development, social attitudes, and online culture. In a recent book, *Sexuality in Adolescence: The Digital Generation* (2016, Taylor & Francis) my co-authors and I examine these issues in detail.'



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led these researchers to conclude that serotonin level is associated with those constant thoughts about the loved one that are part of being 'love struck'.

In another illustration of how some of these effects are manifest, a study by Brand and colleagues (2007) compared newly 'in love' adolescents with a control group who were unpartnered. The 'in love' group scored higher than the controls on hypomania, a mood state (with accompanying thoughts and behaviours) in which emotions are more labile: euphoric one minute, in despair the next. The diary entries of the adolescent love birds showed they had

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more positive morning and evening moods than the controls, shorter sleep times but better quality sleep, lowered daytime sleepiness and better concentration during the day.

Falling in love takes some getting used to, all those different emotions, mood swings, needs and desires. Nevertheless, through their romantic relationships, adolescents have the potential for psychological growth as they learn about themselves and other people, gain experience in how to manage these feelings and develop the skills of intimacy. They also face new risks and challenges. These positive and negative aspects of adolescent romantic relationships are discussed below.

### Psychosocial development

Lifespan developmental theorist Erik Erikson (1968) viewed crushes and youthful romances as important contributors to adolescent self-understanding and identity formation. He described teenage 'falling in love' as a form of self-development rather than true intimacy. Adolescents, becoming more self-aware as their cognitive powers develop, can try out their 'grown-up' identities with romantic partners and through feedback from the partners' responses and behaviours, gradually clarify self-image. The endless talking (and now texting) that often accompanies teen romances is a way of experimenting with different forms of 'self' and testing their effect on the other person.

As well as aiding identity development, adolescent romantic relationships – both short term and longer term – can provide positive learning experiences about the self, for example through influencing self-esteem and beliefs about attractiveness and self-worth, and raising status in the peer group (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2001; 2004). They can assist young people in renegotiating and developing more mature and less emotionally dependent relationships with their parents, as a

precursor for independent living. When there is good will and warmth between the partners, romantic relationships offer a safe environment for learning about and experimenting with sexuality and sexual orientation (Collins et al., 2009). Teenage romantic relationships are, in a sense, a training ground for adult intimacy, providing an opportunity for learning to manage strong emotions, to negotiate conflict, to communicate needs and to respond to a partner's needs (Scanlan et al., 2012).

### Challenges and problems

On the downside, romantic relationships can sometimes lead to unhealthy outcomes. Young people can become too exclusive when they pair up, cutting themselves off from friendship and support networks in ways that do not advance optimal development. Identity formation may be compromised if a teenager closes off developmental options through a partnership in which unhealthy living choices are made, or through early, unplanned parenthood.

Adolescents can be exposed to abusive and violent interactions or unwanted or coerced sexual activity within their romantic relationships (Mulford & Giordano, 2008). Aggression between romantic partners is common, with boys as likely to report abuse behaviour as girls. Collins et al.'s (2009) review indicates that, depending on the sample surveyed, 10 to 48 per cent of adolescents experience physical aggression and 25 to 50 per cent report psychological aggression from their romantic partner, including being sworn at, insulted and threatened. These days, aggression and bullying also occur online, for example, vengeful ex-partners have been known to share private photos or information on social media, causing embarrassment, humiliation or worse to the victim. Some teens appear to be more accepting of

"With experience, if all goes well, love becomes a little less blind"

these situations than is healthy, for example interpreting jealousy and overly possessive behaviours as reflections of love.

Sexual coercion within romantic relationships is relatively common. A national survey of over 2000 Australian secondary students in Years 10, 11 and 12 found that among those who were sexually active, one-quarter had experienced unwanted sex (Mitchell et al., 2014). Reasons given for having sex when they did not want to included being too drunk to say no (49 per cent), frightened (28 per cent) or pressured by their partner (53 per cent). A US study of over 750 female students found almost 50 per cent had had at least one experience of unwanted sex, 70 per cent as part of a casual 'hook-up', and 57 per cent in a committed romantic relationship (Garcia et al., 2012). Regretted sex is also not an uncommon phenomenon among teenagers (e.g. Skinner et al., 2008).

Other challenges facing young people seeking or participating in romantic relationships include unrequited love and breaking up. In the case of unrequited love, fantasies about the other can be intense and obsessional, sometimes leading to misinterpretations that the feelings are reciprocated. In

extreme cases this may result in maladjusted acting-out behaviours, such as aggression and stalking (Leitz & Theriot, 2005), but more commonly the distress is turned inwards, contributing to depression and low self-esteem, sometimes with the risk of self-harm.

Break-ups are a very common feature of adolescent romantic relationships, some of which last only a few weeks. Among a large sample of young people in their early twenties in Australia and Hong Kong, 80 per cent had experienced a break-up (Moore et al., 2012). The impact of splitting up may not be particularly severe or long-lasting, especially in the case of short-term liaisons. Nevertheless, some teenagers are more vulnerable than others. Several studies have shown

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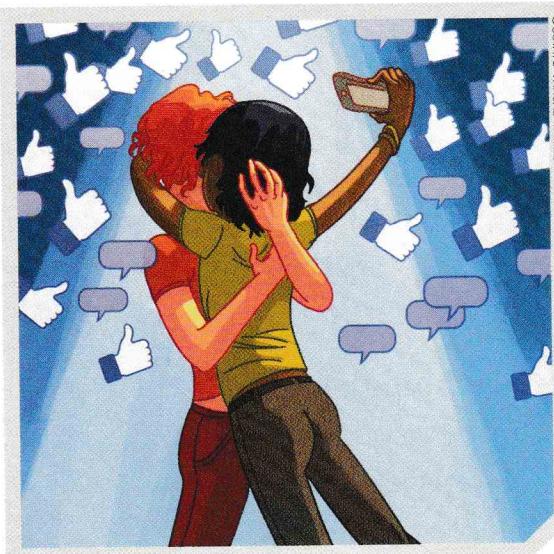
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romantic break-ups associated with depression, particularly among those who have already experienced mood disorders (Davila, 2008; Welsh et al., 2003). In our 2012 study, 40 per cent of participants felt very hurt following their relationship break-up, even though the majority of these dissolutions were self- or mutually initiated. Break-ups were more distressing if they were partner-initiated, and among adolescents with more 'clingy' relationship styles and greater tendencies toward negative mood.

Usually, time heals and experience teaches. Connolly and McIsaac (2009) researched break-ups among Canadian adolescents and found that the most common reasons given for ending a relationship related to unmet affiliation, intimacy, sexual or interdependence needs. In other words, young people were 'moving on' when their relationships were not fulfilling, and in the process, hopefully, were learning more about themselves and others. Over time, and through talking with others, including parents, peers and partners, adolescents can develop cognitive frameworks for better understanding the nature of intimate relationships and learn to cope with their ups and downs. One example comes from a study by Montgomery (2005) of nearly 500 young people aged 12 to 24 years, in which it was shown that older adolescents were less prone to romantic idealisation than younger ones. They were more realistic in their expectations of a romantic partner, so less liable to be disappointed. With experience, if all goes well, love becomes a little less blind.

### Protective factors

With age and maturity come more realistic expectations and, hopefully, stronger capacities to make discerning partner choices, communicate and negotiate with partners and recover from



relationship set backs and break ups. 'Hopefully' is the operative word here, because we know that people of any age can be undone by their heartbreaks and poor romantic choices. Nevertheless there are some protective factors likely to assist young people to negotiate first romantic relationships and survive break-ups.

Early sex education is important, ideally emanating from the home and supported by the school curriculum. It's a bit late for 'the talk' on the eve of a young person's first date. Education that goes beyond the mechanics of sex and emphasises mutual respect, decision-making and the meaning of consent should help young people to resist relationship bullying and sexual coercion. School and community-based programmes that focus on teaching the characteristics of healthy romantic relationships, recognising gender-based stereotypes, improving conflict-management and communication skills, and decreasing acceptance of partner violence can effectively reduce dating violence in adolescent relationships (Foshee et al., 1998). In addition, parental modelling of respectful interrelationships sets a pattern for young people to aim for in their own interactions.

Family and peer discussions that

normalise teenage romantic relations – and breaking up – also help young people to frame their expectations and experiences in context. Some teenagers may need extra encouragement to maintain links with their friends and peer group, and to keep up their sports and hobbies when they are in the throes of an intense romance. But it is important that they do maintain these support links in order to help them resist the kinds of relationships that are too interdependent and have an obsessional quality. When this kind of relationship breaks up, there is a greater risk of distress and depression. Maintaining links with friends provides a distraction from troubles and a sounding board for adolescents to discuss their romantic successes, failures and hopes.

In today's world, cyber safety is a key issue for all of us, but especially young people. Education about topics such as the potential dangers of sexting, online sexual predators and the distortion of romantic relationships depicted on pornography sites is essential for adolescents. Parental monitoring of online activity, especially among children and younger teenagers, may be advisable, and this requires that parents too become educated in new media – savvy about Facebook, Instagram, Tinder and the like. While adolescents need their privacy, it is important for parents to be watchful for warning signs of obsessive and secretive internet use. The heady emotions of falling in love can lead teenagers into unwise activity; the problem with the internet is that sexts and social media posts can come back to haunt them well after a relationship is over.

In summary, adolescent romantic relationships – with all their ups and downs – have the capacity to be growth-promoting, confidence-boosting and healthy experiences that teach young people about the give and take of intimacy. They also provide traps for young players. And while we cannot (and should not) shield the adolescents in our care from all the hurts and disappointments that life throws up, there are protective factors that limit the likelihood of serious harm from toxic partnerships or distressing break-ups. Watchful, kindly and respectful parenting, strong friendship networks and relationship-oriented sex education can all play their part in helping adolescents enjoy their romantic adventures and learn from them.

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# The content of minds

Asifa Majid talks to Jon Sutton about language and thought

I've known you since we were postgrads, and I've always found you fascinating. You're now one of the most interesting and interested people I follow on Twitter. Would you say you're a curious person?

There is a lot to be curious about! I'm just glad I was born in the technological age where you can have the internet in your pocket.

I guess you were always going to end up taking an interdisciplinary approach to your research.

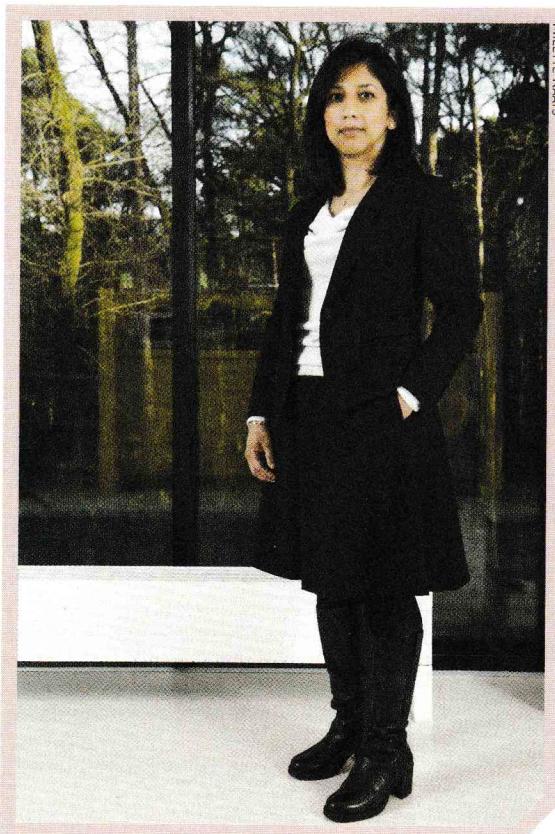
If you're interested in what makes people who they are, I don't think there is a way to avoid being interdisciplinary. We are a product of our biological inheritance and our particular socio-cultural upbringing, so engaging with the relevant literature from both perspectives is important to me. I'm grateful to have received my early university education in Scotland where I was able to study multiple disciplines in parallel. I think that certainly fostered my multidisciplinary thinking.

You're trying to understand to what extent there are shared aspects of word meaning across languages, and where similarities or differences come from, is that right?

I'm really interested in how the mind works and, in particular, what the units of thought are. This is a foundational issue in psychology because all our models of memory, reasoning, decision making, et cetera, rely on assumptions about the units of thought. If working memory has a limit of 7-plus-or-minus-2, then we'd better

know what it is that we are counting.

This interest in the content of minds brought me to the study of words because many scholars assume that the general purpose, non-linguistic units of thought are things like *red*, *four* and *chair* – i.e. words. But if you look at different



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languages around the world you start to see that there is little one-to-one correspondence between words in one language and words in another. The more I started investigating cross-linguistic differences in meaning, the more I became

interested in issue of linguistic variation in its own right.

At the same time, linguistic variation brings new questions to the fore. Do we really think in words? If so, speakers of different languages are thinking very differently from one another in their inner mentalese. Or do we think in some other unit of thought that is universal? If so, then what is it? And how do we map our thoughts into words when we want to communicate them to another person in the specific language we speak? These are the sorts of questions that preoccupy me.

I think it was Roger Brown and Eric Lenneberg who made a distinction between language as 'a cloak following the contours of thought', or individual languages as 'holds into which infant minds are poured'. Could you give me examples of language use to support either option?

Colour is a good example. Across the world, languages differ in how many basic colour words they have. For example, Umpila spoken in Cape York, Australia only has three colours words: *black*, *white*, and *red*; whereas English has a much larger repertoire of 11 basic colour words: *black*, *white*, *red*, *yellow*, *green*, *blue*, *orange*, *pink*, *purple*, *brown*, and *grey*. So, an Umpila-speaking child will have to learn a different set of distinctions to an English-speaking child.

Or take body parts. We make a distinction between our hand and our arm. But if you're a speaker of Indonesian you just refer to your *tangan* (which includes both hand and arm). And if you speak Jahai (in Malaysia) you have to specify further. You have to make explicit whether you mean your upper arm *bliy*, or your lower arm *prber*. There is no general *arm*.

In English we can both *cut* a carrot with a knife and *cut* a piece of paper with scissors, but in Dutch you can only *snijden* the carrot and *knippen* the paper. English speakers *smoke* cigarettes but *drink* water; Punjabi speakers *pii* both.

I could go on. Diversity in word meanings is pervasive. But this diversity is not unbounded. When you start comparing languages systematically, you see some recurring themes and principles structuring the lexicon. For example, there is a regular order with which languages expand their colour vocabulary. If the Umpila language were to gain another colour word, we could predict with some certainty the next word would be either *green* or *yellow*, and not *purple* or *pink*. Similarly, although body part terms vary across languages, they seem to obey segmentation principles from vision. It is unusual in languages to find a term

which refers to the hand and just three quarters of the arm, for example.

**So this is all intimately tied to perception itself? Languages differ markedly in their lexicons for smell, touch, sound, temperature, pain.**

Yes, language is shaped to perception and cognition. But it is also shaped by cultural, environmental and historical factors. Take the colour example again. Colour words mirror our colour vision system. But they also fit contingent cultural factors. For example, languages with fewer basic colour words also have simpler colour-dying technologies. In modern Western societies we apply colours to all sorts of things: from our lips and hair, to our clothes and walls. And we have a wide palette to choose from when

we do this. There have been centuries of innovations in dying technologies. Other communities do not apply colours in the same way. Objects come in their natural colour, so you do not need to single out colour as a property that distinguishes them.

Or take smell. We spend billions on the flavour and fragrance industry every year. Smell is important to us. But still we struggle with naming even familiar smells. But amongst the hunter-gatherer Jahai speakers, talking about smells is easy. The Jahai have a dozen or so dedicated verbs to talk about different qualities of smell. For example, the smell of petrol, smoke, bat droppings, millipede and leaf of gingerwort are *cyes*, but the smells of mushroom, cabbage, some species of hornbill, and the fur of the pig-tailed macaque are all *p?us*. It's hard for us to imagine some of these smells. You've probably not even experienced them. But the smell words in Jahai are not restricted to these sources. They apply even to novel smells Jahai speakers have not experienced before, as we found out when we tested people under experimental conditions.

So, we need to take into consideration socio-cultural factors, as well as perceptual-cognitive ones when thinking about meaning.

**How vital is methodology here? Whenever there's a new article finding that some remote tribe only has three words in their number system, I just think 'really?' Or is it just that cultural and linguistic barriers inevitably make studying language problematic and unreliable?**

You're right, methodology is very important. This is another reason why interdisciplinary work is crucial. If you have guerrilla researchers parachuting into a country, conducting experiments in a few weeks, then whisking off to write a paper about their 'discoveries', you would have every right to feel sceptical about their findings about what a language can and cannot do. But a lot of the important cross-cultural research is based on in-depth fieldwork, where researchers have spent years learning the local language and studying the indigenous culture.

This background knowledge is critical to conducting systematic investigations within the community. Of course, there can still be misunderstandings; just as your average undergraduate can misconstrue the

instructions an experimenter

gives them in a lab. But a good study will never rely on just one source of data. There will be experiments, in-depth linguistic analysis, and ethnographic observation. The combination is critical.

From my perspective I find the reactions of academics to new findings from other cultures as interesting as the cultural phenomena themselves. First, there is outraged scepticism: 'How could this possibly be?', followed by accusations of exoticisation. Then comes the: 'But this is not so different to what we have in our culture after all', where some parallel to the newly discovered phenomena (that was seconds ago impossible to believe) are paraded around. Only after this do people settle down to discussing what the implications are of the new facts for how we understand the human mind.

There are some really exciting studies being conducted right now that bring together psychological, linguistic, and anthropological perspectives, but it is still a challenge to foster cross-disciplinary dialogue.

**In researching this area, presumably the diversity of the world's languages is a great help. Are you fighting a losing battle against time, as these languages die out?**

According to Ethnologue around six languages per year are being lost at the moment. Over 30 per cent of the world's 7000 or so languages used today are threatened and severely endangered. This, of course, has huge repercussions.

In my research, I'm trying to find out both what the recurrent patterns are in languages, and what is unusual. The recurrent patterns can shed light onto

shared cognition and experience. The unusual can shed light on the potential of human language; they help us see what is possible. Each language lost is a loss of a worldview that could help us understand humanity better.

But language loss is not inevitable. We can put language policies into place that help ensure children will continue to learn their ancestral mother tongues, if communities want that. Part of this can be done through bi- or multi-lingual schooling, for example. And language change and evolution is a never-ending process. New varieties appear, as we see with newly emerging village sign languages which occur when a high density of deaf individuals come together and evolve a new way to communicate with each other. So while there are people, there will be languages to study.

**Are some experiences impossible to put into words?**

Our experiences are particular, but words in language are generalisations. So when we express our experience using a specific word, it is only ever a rough guide to convey the experience we had. Say I saw a triangle and told you 'I saw a triangle'. From just the word *triangle*, you wouldn't know if what I saw was a scalene, isosceles or equilateral triangle. When you hear 'I saw a triangle', all you know for sure is: 'Asifa saw a closed figure with three straight sides and three angles'. You only get a rough guide to my experience.

For some sorts of experiences, even these approximations do not seem to work very well. Humans are incredible at face recognition. We can discriminate endless numbers of individuals. But it seems impossible to describe a face such that it individuates it from all other faces. If you had to say what sets apart Katy Perry's face from Zooey Deschanel's, or Will Smith's from Barack Obama's, you would struggle; never mind trying to produce a description that would uniquely identify Katy Perry or Barack Obama from the millions of other faces. Or, let's think about pain. When the doctor asks you to describe the pain in your back, what resources do you really have to express the exact pain? Or what about the time you were on holiday and tried an exotic fruit. Now try describing it to your friend so they can recreate the exact flavour experience you had. It's hard! But compare this to describing the location of the pain, or the colour of the fruit. In comparison that seems relatively easy to do.

These examples are interesting because they potentially tell us something

important about language, and what it really evolved to communicate; and how language interacts with other aspects of cognition. If some experiences are 'ineffable' – i.e. difficult or impossible to put into words – then this tells us about the limits of language, and our underlying cognitive architecture.

It turns out some examples of 'ineffability' are only weak ineffability. That is, they only hold for some languages, not all. Smell is an example of this. Since Plato and Aristotle, it has been widely-held that smells are impossible to describe. And this certainly seems true of English. However, as we saw earlier, Jahai has an elaborate vocabulary to talk about smells, and Jahai speakers find it as easy to talk about smells as they do to talk about colours. This suggests the inability to name smells might not be a necessary fact about the language faculty, and theories which try to explain odour-naming difficulties (amongst English speakers) by solely appealing to neuro- or cognitive-architectural constraints are not sufficient.

**I love that idea of 'drinking' smoke, I think that's the same in Turkish. It really emphasises the cross-modal nature of perception.**

People are creative. When they run up against a limit of their language they can coin new ways of expressing themselves. Metaphor is one way we can do this. When Robert Burns says in his poem: 'O my Luve's like a red, red rose, that's newly sprung in June', he coins a novel metaphor to try and convey the depth of his feelings. Aside from these literary metaphors, ordinary, everyday language

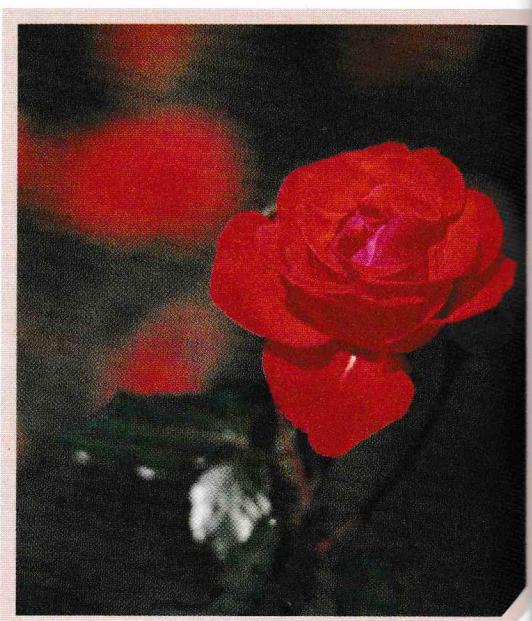
also abounds with conventionalised metaphor. People use terms from one domain to refer to something in another.

For example, in English *sweet* (taste) can also be used to describe people; i.e. a 'gentle, kind or friendly' person. But in Hebrew when *sweet* is used metaphorically it refers to 'inauthenticity'. A *spicy* person in English might be considered 'full of spirit', but a *spicy* person in Hebrew would be someone 'intellectually competent'. If a young man in Guhu Samane (Papua New Guinea) described a group of girls as *sweet*, the man could relate to them as sisters, and approach them. But if the girls were described as *bitter*, that would be because they are potential wife material (because they come from the appropriate clan), and so the young man should be cautious and keep his distance. These are all examples of how taste vocabulary can be used for traits and characteristics of people. Metaphor is pervasive in language.

**Do you speak more than one language yourself? If so, do you think this has an influence on your thinking?**

I grew up bilingual in Punjabi and English, and remember feeling very sorry for the people who could only understand one of the two languages. They were missing so much! I would be struck by the misalignments between the languages. For example, in English sounds have a *high* pitch, but in Punjabi when a sound is 'high' it means it is *loud*. High pitch sounds are described, instead, as being *breek* 'narrow'; and its opposite isn't a wide sound but a 'heavy' sound. Go figure.

Recently my colleagues and I had a chance to visit these different ways of talking about sound. English systematically uses a vertical spatial metaphor to talk about variation in pitch: sounds are *high* or *low*. But in Farsi people don't talk about high and low tones, instead they use a different spatial metaphor and talk about *thin* and *thick* tones. We asked whether these different ways of talking about sounds influenced the way people think about the sounds too. We asked Dutch speakers – who, like English speakers, use the high–low metaphor – and Farsi speakers to listen to some sounds and then sing them back. A very simple task. At the same time as they listened to the sounds, they also saw a visual stimulus. People either saw a line



**If people run up against a limit of their language, they can coin new ways of expressing themselves**

that varied in its vertical position – it appeared higher or lower on the screen; or they saw a line that varied in thickness. We found Dutch people sang the same note back higher in pitch when they saw a line higher on the screen (versus lower on the screen). The vertical height manipulation made no difference to the singing of the Farsi speakers. But Farsi speakers sang the same note back higher when they saw a thinner line (versus a thicker line); Dutch speakers were not affected by this manipulation. This shows for a Dutch (or English) speaking person, high sounds are really thought of as high in space, whereas for Farsi speakers the same sound is thought of as thin. The metaphors are cognitively real.

**How does Dutch academia compare to the UK? Will we ever see you back here?**

The Netherlands is a very vibrant place intellectually. I am lucky enough to receive generous funding from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, and have great support from my university. UK universities are some of the best world-wide, but looking at some of the proposed changes to science funding and university policies makes me worry about the future.

Still, the UK is home, despite having lived abroad for so many years. I miss proper mugs of strong tea, and British chocolate (sometimes Belgian chocolate doesn't quite hit the spot). Ultimately, as a researcher, I have to be in the place where my research is supported and funded.

#### Articles

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Boroditsky, L. (2011, February). How language shapes thought. *Scientific American*, pp.63–65

Evans, N. & Levinson, S.C. (2009). The myth of language universals. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 32(5), 429–492.

#### Books

Dedre Gentner & Susan Goldin-Meadow (Eds.) (2003). *Language in mind: Advances in the study of language and thought*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Barbara C. Malt & Phillip Wolff (Eds.) (2010). *Words and the mind: How words capture human experience*. New York: Oxford University Press.

# Master Practitioner Diploma in CBT

Approved by the British Psychological Society

## RECOMMENDED ENTRY POINT:

**CBT: Introductory Course**  
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## AVAILABLE DATES for CBT: Introductory Course:

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MANCHESTER (Manchester YHA)  
7 – 9 NOVEMBER 2016  
BIRMINGHAM (Ibis Hotel)  
24 – 26 JANUARY 2017

## Master Practitioner Diploma Facts:

- Designed to provide a comprehensive skills based training in CBT
- Covers over 480 hrs training
- 24 direct training modules (34 days, 238 hrs)
- 14 Case Formulation modules (56 hrs)
- 24 Assessed Reading modules (190 hrs)

## Course Tutors:

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- They are extensively experienced both as CBT practitioners and CBT Trainers

## Flexible Approach:

- The individual modules can be taken independently and accumulated towards the Diploma gradually
- You don't need to commit to the whole Diploma at any stage



## Course Duration:

- Time scale for completion of the course is flexible
- Usually you are expected to complete it within 2 years
- It is possible to complete the Diploma within a shorter or longer period of time

## Order of the Modules:

- The order of modules is flexible
- Recommended entry point: 3 day "CBT: Introductory Course" (see dates above)

## Your Training Log:

- All your work towards the Diploma recorded in your Individual Training Log (ITL)
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Questionnaire feedback in psychological therapies	4 July
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Environmental factors in forensic settings	19 July
Coaching through transactional analysis – Applicability and use in practice	6 September
Expert witness 1: Responsibilities and business	7 September
Expert witness 2: Report writing	8 September
Working successfully in private practice	8 September
Supervision skills 3 – Models of supervision	9 September
Developing mindfulness in schools	12 September
The impact of child abuse on children, professionals and adult survivors	12 September
When you think of ethno-cultural counselling, think across the border	16 September
Trauma and dissociation	16 September
Self-empowerment in action: Developing the personal and professional self	19 September
Narrative identity and agency: An exploration of theory and research and application to forensic practice	19 September
Supporting children and young people who hear voices	20 September
Work life balance in 2016 – An evidence-based approach for practitioners	21 September
Expert witness 3: Court room evidence	22 September
Expert witness 4: Using psychometrics	23 September
Assessing adults for neurodiversity: Introduction	27 September
Advance Decisions to refuse treatment 'living wills': Choices at the end of life (Part 2)	27 September
Assessing adults for neurodiversity: Sharing best practice	28 September
An introduction to sleep: Psychobehavioural assessment and treatment strategies for people with insomnia	3 October
An introduction to Liberation psychology	3 October
Advanced assessment and treatment opportunities for people with insomnia	4 October
Participatory action research and its relevance for psychology	4 October
Consultation and supervision in groups and teams	5 October
Working with refugees and asylum seekers	6 October
Aviation psychology: Clinical skills for working with air crew	6-7 October

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2016

CONFERENCE	DATE	VENUE	WEBSITE
Psychology of Women Section	6–8 July	Cumberland Lodge, Windsor	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/pows2016">www.bps.org.uk/pows2016</a>
Division of Counselling Psychology	8–9 July	Hilton Brighton Metropole	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/dcop2016">www.bps.org.uk/dcop2016</a>
Social Section	31 Aug–2 Sept	Mercure Cardiff Holland House Hotel	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/social2016">www.bps.org.uk/social2016</a>
Cognitive Section	31 Aug–2 Sept	Hilton Barcelona	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/cogsec2016">www.bps.org.uk/cogsec2016</a>
Developmental Section	14–16 September	Hilton Belfast	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/dev2016">www.bps.org.uk/dev2016</a>
Children, Young People & their Families	4–5 October	Hilton Sheffield	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/cyf2016">www.bps.org.uk/cyf2016</a>
Psychology4Students	17 November	Mercure Sheffield St Paul's Hotel & Spa	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/p4s2016">www.bps.org.uk/p4s2016</a>
	29 November	Friends Meeting House, Euston, London	
Psychology4Graduates	30 November	Friends Meeting House, Euston, London	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/p4g2016">www.bps.org.uk/p4g2016</a>
Division of Sport & Exercise	12–13 December	Mercure Cardiff Holland House Hotel	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/dsep2016">www.bps.org.uk/dsep2016</a>

2017

Division of Occupational Psychology	4–6 January	Hilton Liverpool	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/dop2017">www.bps.org.uk/dop2017</a>
Division of Clinical Psychology	18–20 January	Hilton Liverpool	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/dcp2017">www.bps.org.uk/dcp2017</a>
Annual Conference	3–5 May	Hilton Brighton Metropole	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/ac2017">www.bps.org.uk/ac2017</a>



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Crisis, Disaster & Trauma  
Psychology Section

## Crisis, Disaster and Trauma Psychology Section Conference & AGM Working with Refugees - what we need to know

Friday 9 September 2016 at Ambassadors Hotel, Bloomsbury, London

Working with refugees and asylum seeking people requires the usual expertise of an applied psychologist but also an understanding of a wide range of additional factors. These include working with an interpreter, developing culturally relevant practice, the legal context, an appreciation of the potential impact of multiple traumatic experiences on refugees but coupled with an awareness and recognition of resilience.

This conference brings together a group of internationally recognized psychologists who have worked for many years with asylum seeking and refugee children, unaccompanied minors, families and other adults. There will not only be a focus on therapy but also on the legal context and the integration of refugees into the world of work. Speakers will

present current views on the psychology of working with refugees.

The event will be particularly interesting to practitioners engaged in working with asylum seeking people and refugees, both those new to the field and those with more experience, including clinical, counselling, educational and social psychologists and those with an academic interest in this area.

Registration for this event is now open, fees can be found on the event booking form.

To register please go to: [www.bps.org.uk/cdt2016](http://www.bps.org.uk/cdt2016)  
or [www.kc-jones.co.uk/cdt2016](http://www.kc-jones.co.uk/cdt2016)

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# Little people, big questions

Ian Florance talks to educational psychologist **Irvine Gersch**

I met Professor Irvine Gersch at the University of East London (UEL) where he is Director of the Professional Doctorate in Applied Educational and Child Psychology. I quickly discovered he'd looked at previous 'Careers' interviews in *The Psychologist* and prepared a list of possible questions, but we ended up having a rich conversation about his real passion: how psychology can help children.

Irvine started working with children in his mid-teens. 'I did youth leadership work and naturally chose children with special educational needs to work with. I didn't particularly want to be a teacher – I'd like to go back and thank the extraordinarily insightful careers interviewer who suggested to me when I was about 18 that I become an educational psychologist. He got it spot on.'

In his own words, he 'started to fly' during his degree at Bangor. 'I'd not done well at school. After I finished my degree I saw a report on me from my school which said "this boy is not university material". I went on to do a four-year postgraduate course to become an educational psychologist at Swansea University. The whole thing came naturally. I got a job in the London Borough of Waltham Forest and stayed there for 26 years, moving up from a junior to a principal psychologist role.'

The stability of Irvine's early career disguises the energy and creativity with which he addressed being an educational psychologist. He published a lot. 'I was told by a lecturer at Swansea that you

need to publish three articles a year. If you look at my publication list, you'll see it reflects a variety of topics raised by my actual work and experience with children, and the way educational psychology's roles needed to change to be most relevant and helpful. This means being adaptive and creative and fitting the real-life context within which children and families live.'

Irvine also committed time to working on professional issues, first within the British Psychological Society and then advising on government policy. 'I felt strongly that a one-year master's degree in educational psychology wasn't enough to give new psychologists an in-depth understanding of children. In particular, it didn't equip them to really *listen* to children. Underlying everything I've done is a real desire to empower children through listening to their voices. I chaired the Society's training committee for educational psychologists, and this led to work with government on the DfEE report *On the Future of Educational Psychology* (2000). This taught me about the process of change. Working with a wonderful group of committee members who were experienced and leading psychologists, I had to engage and convince government, unions, the society and profession. We succeeded – our core training for educational psychology is indeed a three-year postgraduate professional doctorate.'

The experience also reinforced Irvine's views on the profession of psychology. 'Ultimately there are no different forms of

psychology. The word "division" in itself is an interesting word to use in this context, when we need to be cohesive.'

Irvine tells me that the landscape is changing rapidly, and that our profession needs to keep up with the changes. 'Psychologists have huge potential roles, ranging from confessor to story-teller to health promoter and, most importantly, problem solver – you name it, we use our skills and knowledge to facilitate it. Dividing us up can get in the way of these wider roles.'

In education work, Irvine is a firm believer that 'the child must be at the centre of things'. 'I was lucky when I started my job that I wasn't given a job description. I was told that my goal was "to do what's best for the children and to help" and that removed barriers. As a principal educational psychologist I wanted my team to be creative, to take risks, to draw from a variety of fields and to be pioneering, all the time applying the best of psychology to improve the lives of children and families, schools and organisations. So I set up a mediation service to deal with the many special needs legal disputes; established learning support teams to work with children with special needs; and set up a trauma service. Working with teachers and speech therapists, we also ran groups for children with speech and language difficulties and learning issues, and those excluded from school.'

At the same time Irvine completed his doctorate on what makes an effective head teacher (which included children's views of the qualities needed). This led to a head teacher and teacher mentorship scheme and a consultancy role with the National Audit Office working group that carried out research and reported to the government on poorly performing schools. 'Some of these roles are now quite common, but then were new.'

In 2002 the BPS awarded Irvine the annual Award for Distinguished Contributions to Professional Psychology for his work. 'I'm proud of what we did at Waltham Forest.'

Have you taken a look at our website, [www.thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/](http://www.thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/)?

If you click on the '...meets' tab across the top, you will find an archive of all our more personal pieces, including our 'Careers' pages. Alternatively, just search 'careers' with our new and improved site search. The archive is complete – back to 1988.

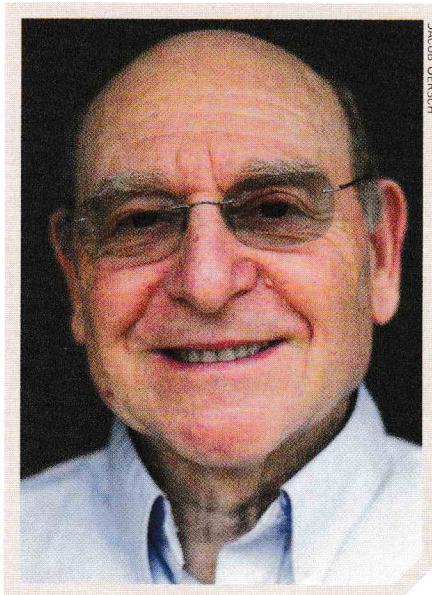
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As Irvine starts on the story of the second half of his career, eloquence gives way to slight embarrassment as he related what he described as a weird experience. 'I was on holiday and was talking to someone who did not know me, but insisted on making three predictions in a rather mysterious tone. The first prediction was that I would help children in a wider area than one local authority. The second was that I would become interested in spirituality and philosophy. And the third was that I would become a professor in a year. Despite my scepticism, they all came true.'

Irvine became Director of Training for Educational Psychologists at the University of East London in 2000. This seems an odd move for someone so committed to working directly with children. 'I felt I was still making a difference. Every educational and child psychologist, whatever specific role they have, affects children at different levels – through work with individual children or, training others, changing systems, advising schools, or through affecting school, local authority and government policy. But UEL also appealed to me as an entrepreneurial university, in the best possible sense – there seemed to be a scope and open-mindedness here. As a professor, I can think outside the box and say even more crazy things than I normally do!'

Irvine started studying early thinkers and mystics. 'Psychology has missed out through largely ignoring early – and later – philosophers, and is the poorer for that. Psychology tends to dismiss spiritual writers, and that's also a big mistake. From my point of view this reading began to challenge the view that children are not able to answer big questions about meaning and purpose. Is that true? I and my students started to study this and, lo and behold, of course children can. They're totally at home with the big questions that go back to Socrates, Aristotle and others, and they can answer them very lucidly and with amazing insight.' This work has so far led to two publications: *The Little Box of Big Questions* [see [www.smlworld.co.uk](http://www.smlworld.co.uk) and [www.thepsychologist.org.uk/volume-26/edition-4/reviews](http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk/volume-26/edition-4/reviews)] and *The Little Box of Big Questions 2* [see [www.thepsychologist.org.uk/volume-29/february/reviews](http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk/volume-29/february/reviews)]. Each comprises a series of cards designed to promote (as it says on the tin!) 'philosophical conversations with young people.' Irvine tells me 'Children think and say, and can do, wonderful things. If only we could just harness their ideas, the world might be a better place.'



JACOB GERSCH

I had been intrigued that Irvine listed one of his interests as spiritual listening. 'I define spiritual as that which deals with the animating or vital drive. It may be religious or not. So, in a sense the little boxes are to do with spirituality. But I was initially criticised that I was slipping in religion under a disguise, so I tend to talk about philosophical conversations and philosophical listening. In fact, I'm rather proud that we've had feedback on the little boxes from people of all religions and those with none, and all of them found the boxes to be relevant and useful, with none finding anything objectionable to their beliefs. This is not surprising, because our tools raise questions, thus leaving children to find their own answers and to make plans. And I've just finished a coaching course and hope that soon we'll be able to do a box of big questions for adults.'

Some years ago Irvine stepped down from his role as a programme director for the initial training programme for educational and child psychologists to take over a course for practising educational psychologists who wanted to upgrade their MSc to a doctorate. He now works at UEL 50 per cent of the time. 'I also work with my son who has a mediation company dealing with SEN and other issues. We work with about a third of local authorities in England. I also mentor colleagues within the university and external clients.'

It seemed a good time to talk to Irvine about what the future looks like for psychology and for students entering the profession. Just as well, then, that one of his many interests is futurology. 'First, I hope people working with children will understand just how very different individual children are. Sometimes we treat them as too similar. And we need to listen more than ever to what they say.'

and then use this information to inform planning and action.'

Arguing that the debate as to whether psychology is an art or a science is 'beside the point', Irvine says 'we must be open to external influences. Insights of spirituality, philosophy and the performing arts, for instance, will make us more creative thinkers. We need to be as creative as any artist but with one major difference – once we've had those new thoughts we must evaluate them through the tools of psychological research. We must measure the effects of what we do. Evidence-based practice is fundamental to applied psychology. We're different from disciplines like philosophy because our thinking and analysis are not ends in themselves: they are aimed at action. We could be at the beginning of a new stage in psychology in which we cover more diverse areas, but in which divisions and specialisms converge. There will be much more cross-over between public and private work, and new psychologists must expect and plan for portfolio careers.'

He sees psychology as needing to follow an external agenda. 'What are people worried about? How can our profession help or address these issues? Fear of terrorism is a major concern in society – how can we help not just society in general but children and parents with their undoubted fears? We have a proactive role here, seeking to pre-empt rather than cure.'

To be even more futuristic, Irvine thinks we have a role in dealing with new technologies and the impact they will have on children and adults. 'What will psychology's role be in an era when artificial intelligence and augmented reality develop? Brain implants, self-conscious machines and robots, are all predicted in my children's lifetime. Surely psychology has a role in coping with these developments?'

And finally, what does the future hold for Irvine. 'I would like to record some of my experiences, lessons from life, my personal and professional journey – perhaps as a podcast for my grandchildren. Luckily one of them is a film maker, and my daughter a theatre director.'

Since he'd prepared his own answers, I can tell you that Irvine would have been a pilot if he hadn't been a psychologist, and his favourite film is *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. 'I love that film because the British Major taken prisoner simply refuses to accept his role as captive, and ultimately takes charge. Nothing could diminish his attitudes and sense of justice.'

# Twists and turns from Wales to Canada

Tracey Herlihey on the importance of persistence and networking in finding that 'dream job'

**W**hat do you want to be when you grow up? It's such a simple question, one that you have likely been asked or asked others countless times.

If you had asked 11-year-old Tracey this question, she would have told you she wanted to be a police officer when she grew up. 14-year-old Tracey wanted to be a lawyer. 16-year-old Tracey wanted to be a forensic scientist. But 16-year-old Tracey didn't select the appropriate options at A-level, so 18-year-old Tracey wanted to be a forensic psychologist. You might have noticed a theme in what I aspired to be, so you might be surprised to hear that 31-year-old Tracey from Cheshire is a Human Factors Specialist at the University Health Network in Toronto, Canada.

So how did I get here? What got me interested in psychology? And, did I ever grow up?

I first considered psychology when I was selecting my A-level courses at college. I remember going to the open evening and picking up a purple leaflet with one of those black clip-art stick figures that were so popular back in the late 1990s. The stick man was scratching his head and the text next to him read – 'Why do people think they're teapots?' I didn't know, but it was enough to make me want to find out. As it turned out, I still don't know why people think they're teapots, but I know a lot more about other stuff that I find to be just as interesting.

When selecting universities I was set on studying forensic psychology, but based on very good advice from my college tutor I decided to pursue a more general degree and specialise later on. I was excited to be accepted at Cardiff University for their Applied Psychology 'sandwich' degree (now renamed to 'degree with professional placement'). My plan was to spend the additional year working overseas in a forensic psychology placement. Forensic placements were coveted (and still are!). I reached out to potential supervisors overseas without any luck. While I was excited to be offered a forensic placement not far from Cardiff, I had to make the decision between my passion for forensics and my desire to spend time overseas. Overseas won. I applied to a number of different types of placements and was offered an occupational psychology placement in Australia and a research assistant position

at York University in Toronto, Canada. The position in Canada offered a monthly stipend, so I opted for the research position so I could afford to come home for Christmas. Little did I know that this seemingly flippant decision would go on to have the biggest impact on my career.

I finished my 'sandwich' year at the Centre for Vision Research in Toronto. I enjoyed the research and so upon

returning to Cardiff for the final year of my undergrad I opted to pursue a PhD. I had hoped to pursue my PhD in Canada (to return to my boyfriend, now husband), but unfortunately that wasn't meant to be (since my international applications were unsuccessful). Instead, I stayed in Cardiff and spent three fun

years investigating the visual guidance of walking. After finishing my PhD I emigrated to Canada. I had spent the last year of my PhD frantically writing, collecting data and applying for postdoctoral fellowships that would enable me to return to Toronto. I hadn't really considered other career options at this point. A postdoctoral fellowship seemed like the next logical thing to do. I landed myself a fellowship in cognitive neuroscience at the University of Toronto. This was quite the switch from my visual guidance of walking work, but it allowed me to continue with some patient research I had been trying to do on the side during my PhD.

As the end of my two-year fellowship approached I found myself asking the same question – what did I want to be? At this point, I knew three things: (1) I wanted my PhD to be recognised; (2) I did not want to go back to school, and (3) I wanted to stay in Toronto.

I considered a number of different career options and spent many months conducting informational interviews, attending networking events and skills workshops, joining 'Meetup' groups and

sending out applications. I considered careers in academia (why not? It's the next logical step), teaching (I had always enjoyed teaching during my PhD and then as a sessional instructor during my postdoc), management consulting (make lots of money), marketing or market research (what do you do with a PhD in psychology?), and project management (ditto).

I interviewed at worldwide management consulting firms and multinational technology corporations. Most interviews (and there weren't very many) were unsuccessful, some were, but there was often a roadblock (e.g. funding cuts) at the last hurdle, or timing issues (I was unwilling to move at the time I was offered a position). I was frustrated by the lack of recognition of the skillset I had developed over the course of my PhD and postdoctoral training. Many positions requested work experience but did not recognise the additional years spent in academia as such.

While attending a project management workshop I met a fellow Psych PhD and we got talking/ranting about the move from academia to industry. This is how I learned about the world of user experience (UX) research and a grant designed to help academics make the transition to industry. This impromptu conversation was a real turning point for me. I started to look into UX roles and applied for the grant (offered by Mitacs, an agency funded by the Canadian government). I landed myself a six-month fellowship that contributed to my salary at a small start-up UX firm. During my fellowship I took on a second sessional instructor role teaching psychology and design. The goal was to build on my skills learned in my new UX design role as well as continuing to expand my skillset as a teacher. Once my six months were up I was ready to move on. I had enjoyed my first step into industry, but realised that UX was not for me.

At this point I had learned that I loved applying psychology. The part of my UX role I enjoyed the most was collecting and analysing research data and, based on what we know about people, making



recommendations on how to improve the usability of products. The part I did not enjoy was the lack of impact: projects included improving a website that tracked parcels and restructuring a professional services firm's intranet to make things easier to find (yawn!). And so I found myself pondering again... what did I want to be?

I had been attending seminars hosted by the Human Factors Interest Group at the University of Toronto for some time and had recently attended a 'careers' luncheon. This is where I learned about my current company. I e-mailed one of the managers directly and asked for an informational interview. I wanted to learn whether my skillset would be appropriate and what I could do to improve my chances of moving into the field of human factors (I had previously been told I would have to complete a master's degree in human factors if I wanted to move into that field). The phone call went well, but the company had recently hired a number of summer students and a full-time employee so wouldn't be looking for new employees in the near future. This was in

April 2013. In May I received a message through LinkedIn asking if I would be interested in interviewing. I started my role as a Human Factors Specialist in July.

Why the long story? I hope it highlighted that there are many twists and turns in figuring out 'what you want to be when you grow up'. There are often many failed applications hiding in the shadows of successful ones, but these are often not talked about. I hope it provides some inspiration and shows that there is light at the end of the career search tunnel. Each time I hit a roadblock, time spent reaching the block was not time wasted. Failed interviews were great practice. Poor career choices helped me figure out exactly what I did not want to do and what I enjoyed doing. Informational interviews helped me make some great contacts and perfect my résumé. I certainly hope that outlining the road to my current career provides some motivation to keep trying and adapting, because eventually you will find something that fits.

"Poor career choices helped me figure out what I did not want to do"

If I were to offer some advice it would be to network, network and network some more. I didn't get my current job because I applied to a posting on the company's website. The same goes for my previous job and my postdoc before that.

If networking in person isn't your thing, I get it, it isn't mine either. I did this a few times and it didn't work for me, so I did one-on-one informational

interviews instead. These worked much better. People were helpful; I found if they couldn't help me themselves, they would point me in the direction of someone they knew who they thought could.

Don't expect to find your dream job immediately. As you gain experience you will learn more about yourself, your interests, and your talents. From there your idea of your 'dream job' will evolve with you. And, when you finally do find a role that fits you, be prepared to give back and help others as I'm sure many will help you along your way.

## Jobs of the month on [www.psychapp.co.uk](http://www.psychapp.co.uk)

### Psychologist

#### The National Autistic Society

**Location** - South East

**Salary** - £43,072 pa - £51,964 pa  
+ £499 pa Area Allowance

**Deadline** - 13/06/2016



### Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in Psychology (Counselling Psychology)

#### University of Wolverhampton

**Location** - Midlands - West

**Salary** - £33,574 - £47,801 pa  
**Deadline** - 23/06/2016



### MST Clinical Supervisor

#### Birmingham Childrens Hospital

**Location** - Midlands - West

**Salary** - £39,632-£47,559  
**Deadline** - 27/06/2016



### Chartered Occupational Psychologist

#### Symbiotics Performance Solutions

**(SPS Ltd trading as Resource Group)**

**Location** - Midlands - West

**Deadline** - 24/06/2016



### Consulting Psychologists

#### Dyslexia Action

**Location** - South East

**Salary** - Competitive

**Deadline** - 15/06/2016



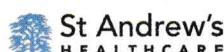
### Clinical or Forensic Psychologist

#### St Andrew's Healthcare

**Location** - Midlands - East

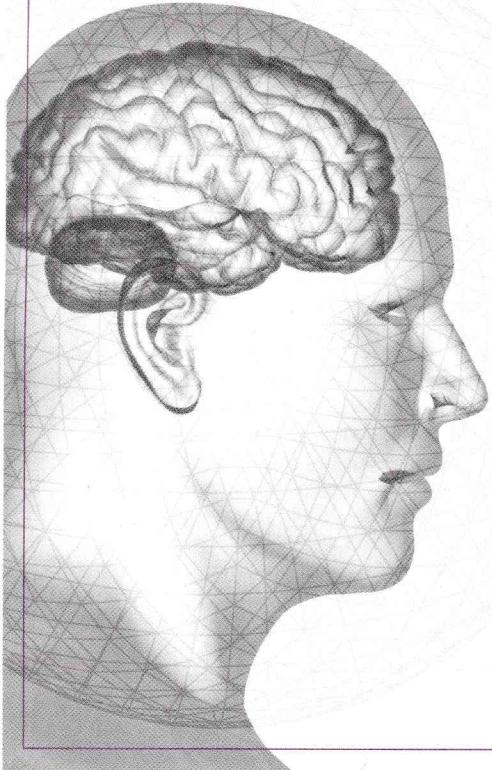
**Salary** - £40 - £60k

**Deadline** - 26/06/2016



To view these jobs and more please visit [www.psychapp.co.uk](http://www.psychapp.co.uk)

# Advertising opportunities in 2016



**CPL has been appointed by the British Psychological Society and we are very excited to be your point of contact for all advertising. CPL is an award-winning full service agency that was established in 1996.**

In early 2016 we will be launching a new appointments website. It will be accessible on mobiles and desktops, with increased search functionality, greater ease of use and navigation. It will also have many more targeted options to allow you to promote your roles to members and other visitors to [www.psychapp.co.uk](http://www.psychapp.co.uk).

You will be happy to hear that all recruitment advertisers in the print edition of *The Psychologist* will continue to have their adverts included on the new appointments site.

To discuss the opportunities for advertising and promotion in *The Psychologist*, [www.psychapp.co.uk](http://www.psychapp.co.uk) and *Research Digest*, please contact Matt Styrka on 01223 378005 or email [matt.styrka@cpl.co.uk](mailto:matt.styrka@cpl.co.uk).

Upcoming issues	Display advert deadline	Appointment section deadline	Publication date
August	29 June	6 July	21 July
September	27 July	3 August	18 August

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The British Psychological Society  
Promoting excellence in psychology

## Senior Educational Psychologist / Maingrade Educational Psychologist Leicestershire County Council



Leicestershire  
County Council

### Permanent appointments, full-time and part-time applications considered

Leicestershire's Educational Psychology Service has a long-standing and strong commitment to applying psychological research to improve the educational outcomes of vulnerable young people throughout childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Demand for commissioned work means we look to recruit new staff.

Applications are invited for the post of Senior Educational Psychologist/ Locality Manager. This is a key leadership appointment which requires the post holder to manage a small team of educational psychologists, contribute to the leadership of the Service at strategic and operational levels and work collaboratively with other partner agencies.

The Senior EP post is paid at Soulbury Scale B, 3 to 6 (negotiable) with 3 additional SPA points available for eligible candidates.

Applications are also invited for the post of Maingrade Educational Psychologist (Soulbury Scale A, point 8, with 3 SPA points additionally available). The successful candidate will promote the use of evidence-based psychological research, especially positive psychology frameworks, to address concerns about children's development, emotional well-being, mental health and academic progress 0 to 25 years.

Existing SPA points will be honoured for both posts.

### Essential Requirements for both posts:

- Registered with Health and Care Professions Council to work as an educational psychologist
- Knowledge of current legislation, safeguarding regulations and other guidance as relevant to the job role of an educational psychologist
- A commitment to ensure local children have the best possible learning environment and opportunities within his or her local school
- Able to travel within and beyond Leicestershire to undertake work with and for young people
- A professional determination to participate in and contribute to personal as well as whole Service developments
- A DBS enhanced check.

Leicestershire County Council is seeking to promote the employment of disabled people and will make any adjustments considered reasonable. Please contact Anne Matthews, Head of Service for preliminary enquiries. Tel: 0116 305 5100

Email: [anne.matthews@leics.gov.uk](mailto:anne.matthews@leics.gov.uk)

**Closing date for applications: 15th July**

<http://jobs.eastmidlandssharedservices.org/Leicester/>

## ual: university of the arts london

**Role:** Course Leader: BSc (Hons) Psychology of Fashion

**Employer:** University of the Arts London

**Description:** Course Leader: BSc (Hons) Psychology of Fashion

**Permanent, full-time**

**Salary:** £43,483 - £52,389 pa

**College/Service:** London College of Fashion

**Location:** London College of Fashion - John Prince's St

### The role:

This is a unique opportunity to lead our new undergraduate course and to work closely with the Subject Director Psychology in this new curriculum area for the College. You will be responsible for the academic leadership and management of the course, ensuring that the curriculum is relevant, current and consistent with the missions of the Programme and of the Fashion Business School. You will be expected to take part in teaching and assessment at postgraduate level too. You will be research active and contribute to research group development and other cross-College initiatives concerned with understanding psychological phenomena across the realm

of fashion. Possible areas of investigation include organisational psychology, social cognition, lifespan development, self-identity and well-being.

### Your profile:

You are an expert in your field with a PhD in Social Psychology and a successful research profile. You will have taught Psychology to non-psychologists and your knowledge, skills and experience will enable you to work across disciplines. You will possess a teacher training qualification and demonstrable ability to encourage, support and sustain the development and flourishing of students.

If you have any queries about this role, you may contact the LCF Staffing Team at [vacancies@fashionarts.ac.uk](mailto:vacancies@fashionarts.ac.uk).

To apply, please visit: <https://ual.tal.net/vx/lang-en-GB/appcentre-1/candidate/postings/2144>

Closing date: 17 June 2016, 23:55pm.

**Job Title:** Paediatric and Educational Psychologists  
**Employer:** Mind Institute/Little Academy Nursery

Again, a faraway location for a Psychologist Featured Job: last month we highlighted roles in Thailand; this month we focus on a psychologist role in Doha, the capital city of Qatar.

Doha is far and away the largest city in the country with a population close to 1.5 million. Qatari nationals make up a minority of the population: the majority are from South East Asia, though with sizeable populations from Australia, the USA and Europe. The city is on the Persian Gulf coast; its climate will appeal to someone who likes heat and sunshine and doesn't crave rain! Arabic is the official language though English is used widely as a second language, especially in commerce.

The investment going into the city is unrivalled. It held the 2006 Asian games and will host the FIFA 2022 World Cup. There are many sports facilities in the city, new investment in transport systems (including a new airport and a metro system under construction) and a number of art and cultural initiatives including the iconic Museum of Islamic Art.

Mind Institute began with the dream of two sisters, both experts in education, who founded Little Academy nursery in 2006. It grew quickly to being rated as one of the top five nurseries by the Ministry of Social Affairs in Doha. Substantial growth demanded a second branch, which opened in 2014. Its cross-disciplinary team, from the UK, Canada, USA, South Africa, and France, includes nursery teachers and managers as well as nurses and a nutritionist, who all share a vision for the next generation in Doha.

The more Little Academy Nursery grew and expanded, the more these educators noticed the prevalence of special needs



among the children they were seeing. It soon became clear that the Little Academy Nursery couldn't accommodate children with learning disabilities and so a centre with dedicated facilities and staff was needed. The Mind Institute was born.

This is a brand new, state-of-the-art facility that works with children with communication disorders, fine and gross motor challenges, language delays, emotional disorders, sensory integration issues, social skills challenges, and more. The facilities and staff are the first of their kind in Doha, featuring multilingual special needs therapy. It will offer a holistic non-medical after-school programme using brain-based approaches, targeting measurable changes in academic performance.

The Mind Institute is a catalyst of demonstrable change for children with special needs and their families. From the success of Little Academy Nursery and the vision to take it a step further, the leaders of Mind Institute have expanded their scope, refined their methods, grown their resources and, most importantly, stayed true to their original purpose and passion: educating children of the future.

## Paediatric Psychologists required in Qatar



An exciting opportunity has come up in a brand new, state-of-the-art facility **opening in Doha, Qatar**. We work with children with communication disorders, fine and gross motor challenges, language delays, emotional disorders, sensory integration issues, autism spectrum disorders, feeding disorders, and social skills challenges.

We are seeking a highly qualified **HCPC registered Paediatric Psychologist with extensive experience in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy** with a minimum of 2 years experience. The practitioner will join our therapy team providing psychological therapy to children and adolescents with a wide range of mental health difficulties. The successful applicant will provide specialised assessment and therapeutic intervention. The successful candidate will possess excellent written and verbal communication skills with a flexible approach to working.

**Applicants must:**

- Have a Master's degree in Psychology or Applied Psychology
- Have a recognised license to practice
- Previous experience in developmental and psychological evaluation and treatment of children and adolescents with a wide range of psychological, behavioral, learning and developmental problems.
- Be a Native English Speaker
- Have a clear police clearance from their home country

**Package and Benefits:**  
We offer a very attractive, full competitive package, including:

- A Tax Free salary
- Annual return flight to the home country
- Paid accommodation
- 21 days annual leave
- Health care
- Uniform
- End of service benefit
- The opportunity to work in a truly unique, state of the art, environment.

We are also seeking a highly qualified **HCPC Educational Psychologist** with a minimum of 2 years experience to work with other therapists to ensure that consultation, advice and support is provided to children and their families. The successful candidate will provide robust and comprehensive assessments of patients to identify the child's educational and developmental needs and come up with an appropriate plan of action. They will develop and apply interventions to promote psychological well being, social, emotional and behavioral development and raise educational standards.

**Applicants must:**

- Have a Master's degree in Educational Psychology
- Have a minimum of two years' experience
- Have a recognized and valid license and is a HCPC member
- Have a clear Police Clearance

The successful applicant must be available to start in the second week of September.

To apply, please send your CV to:  
**pippas@littleacademynursery.com**





## A small museum making a big impact

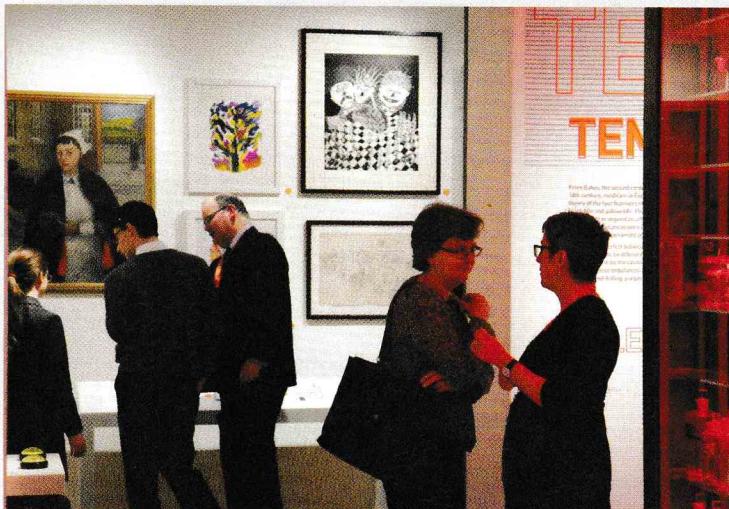
Since its inception in 2003 the prestigious annual Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year has been a showcase for an surprisingly wide range of museums across the UK. This year one of the nominations is Bethlem Museum of the Mind, a small but perfectly formed museum to mental health, which is part of the mental health trust I work alongside, South London and Maudsley. Since the Museum moved to its new building in February 2015 I have been meaning to take a look, but like most things that are in your own backyard, it sometimes takes an extra push (like a nomination) to make a trip.

I should have visited earlier. There is much to provoke thought here, all housed in a building that used to be an administrative centre for the Bethlem Hospital, and sitting right in its centre. We entered to the famous life-size statues of 'Raving and Melancholy Madness' that greeted patients and visitors at the entrance of the Bethlem Hospital from 1676 to 1815. They are extraordinary in

their power, portraying the two dominant conceptualisations of mental health at the time: mania and depression. Raving is chained, raising uncomfortable questions from the outset about restraint and freedom, stigma and stereotypes, and further on is displayed a straitjacket and, behind a wall and against a mirror so that only the reflections can be seen, a collection of leather restraints. One of the rooms contains padded walls salvaged from the hospital, and at all times you are aware that this is a place where mental health treatment of all types happened. There is also clever repurposing of the building itself, with the dark rooms housing the collections giving way to corner spaces overlooking the beautiful gardens of the Maudsley, where light swims in from windows at foot level, and from portholes in the roof. Highlights include works by Richard Dadd, who was at Bethlem himself, having been declared a 'criminal lunatic' after he committed a murder in the 1840s; and by Louis William Wain, known for his images of cats.

I visited with a colleague, Dr Richard Corrigall, a consultant psychiatrist specialising in adolescence, and an artist himself. We looked together at William Kurelek's famous 'The Maze', depicting the inside of his 'unravelled head', and partially painted while he was a patient at the Maudsley. I could not begin to describe on paper why Kurelek's image is so powerful and enduring, but it is. As I stood in front of it, viewing it from the vantage point of 'well', it left me with an impression of my own head, and how close to unravelling any one of us might be at any time. As we looked at a piece by Joan Molly, in which a broken grandfather clock spewed forth billows of purple velvet from the open door of its tower, Dr Corrigall and I talked about the roles art can play in mental health. It can help those with mental health problems make sense of their illnesses and their identity; it can convey to others what it feels like to be unwell, communicating something that can't be explained by science; and crucially it can break down the stigma surrounding mental health by its very humanness of self-expression. This museum, with its clever juxtapositions of art alongside mental health artefacts, achieves all of these and more.

The Museum houses permanent and temporary collections, but that is not the whole story. Its central aim is to educate, to inform, and to promote understanding about the context of mental health and mental health care. To this end, items from the collections may be borrowed, and whole exhibitions can be loaned.



Bethlem Museum of the Mind  
Bethlem Royal Hospital, Monks Orchard Road,  
Beckenham BR3 3BX





There is also a small reference library, and comprehensive archives, dating back to around 1550, including patient records from the 1850s. All are available to researchers, and there is a dedicated archivist to facilitate access. Vicky Northwood, the Director of the Museum, is on a mission to expand its educational function. To facilitate this, on Mondays and Tuesdays the Museum is closed to the general public to allow group visits: groups of students in search of knowledge to enhance their studies; or clinicians and service users interested in the insights the Museum can provide. Other than students, clinicians and service users, who comes to the Museum? The general public are coming in their droves, and it's everyone from local people to an international audience. Visitor numbers are steadily increasing, and the buzz created by the Museum of the Year nomination can only be a good thing.

As visitors enter the collections upstairs they are greeted by the words of those who have had a relationship with Bethlem over the ages. One quote has stayed with me:

'A young man came to the cell, and putting his face through the bars, interrogated the madman, why he was put in there: the madman fixed his eyes upon him, and looking with ineffable contempt, turned away: the young man repeated his question, with some clamorous insult. The madman rose and advanced towards him, upon which the person spate in his face; and laughing, again renewed his interrogatory – for what was you put into this cell? The madman, with calm disdain, stooped down, took up some of the straw, whereon he lay, wiped the spittle with it from off his face – and smiling said, "You ask, why I was put into this dismal cell. I'll tell you, Sir. It was for the loss of that, which God Almighty never gave you, or you wou'd not have treated me with such indignity." (The London Chronicle, 1761)'

Whatever the young man had not been given, he might just have found it in this museum.

The winner of the Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year is due to be announced on 6 July at a special dinner at the Natural History Museum in London.

Reviewed by Sally Marlow who is Public Engagement Fellow, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience

## How far we have come...



In a Different Key: The Story of Autism  
John Donvan & Caren Zucker

John Donvan and Caren Zucker, award-winning journalists, have written a fastidious, historical account of autism that will appeal to the lay person and professional alike. *In a Different Key* presents narrative accounts of individuals' experiences of autism. The book commences in the 1930s with a child called Donald Triplett whose parents sought answers to his atypical presentation, which resulted in a seminal meeting in Baltimore, with Leo Kanner. Kanner later identified Donald as Case 1, and thus starts the history of how autism emerged as the developmental condition that Kanner called a 'sample of serendipity'.

There is no stone left unturned in this book. Accounts of the underbelly of autism that include the historical contexts of Bruno Bettelheim's 'mother-blaming theory', the unveiling of Kanner's Nazi background, the impact of Wakefield's MMR research, as well as the litany of atrocious conditions that individuals with autism experienced in residential settings in the United States, are also narrated.

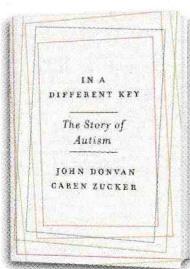
We are also introduced to individuals who advocated for the rights of those with autism and who battled to ensure appropriate access to education for children. These individuals include Tom Gilhool, a lawyer who led the fight in the courts. Accounts of parents' experiences of raising a child with autism weave a thread through this book. There is the harrowing story of a father who killed his son in desperation, and the uplifting stories of Temple Grandin, Alex Plank and Ari Ne'eman, whose families embraced their difference.

The book also presents the roles played by stalwarts in autism research in the UK. The story of the groundbreaking first epidemiological study of South African Victor Lotter, who attempted to count prevalence rates in the UK, is told. However,

the legacies of research that were carried out, and that continue to be pioneering, including that of Lorna Wing, Uta Frith and Simon Baron-Cohen to name a few, are deserving of greater mention and further analysis than this book provides.

For anyone interested in autism, this is an essential read as it reminds readers of the grim realities that were faced by individuals with autism in the past, and acknowledges the sacrifices that were made by those to progress the rights of individuals with autism. The book ends with the story of Donald's 80th birthday, surrounded by many friends in his local community, who embraced his difference and allowed him to thrive in an inclusive setting. There are teary moments also, particularly the story about Archie Casto who spent his life in a residential setting only to be released at 74 years of age and who saw the ocean, for the first time, at 81.

Archie's account is a stark reminder of the harrowing treatment individuals faced but, despite the odds, managed to have some quality of life in their twilight years. Any reader of this book would appreciate how far we have come in embracing and supporting our neurodiverse population.



Crown Publishers, 2016; Hb £32.99  
Reviewed by Paula Prendeville, a Chartered Psychologist who teaches on the professional course at the University College Dublin. She also works as an educational psychologist in the Brothers of Charity, a service for children with autism in Cork, Ireland. She is a Visiting Scholar at Georgetown University, Washington DC.

## 'But the patient is lost'...

Blue/Orange

Young Vic, London (Matthew Xia, Director)

Joe Penhall's iconic play *Blue/Orange* examines power, psychosis, ethnicity and psychiatry. Dr Sally Marlow talks to the playwright and to a psychiatrist, and looks at the literature in the area, to explore the questions the play raises, and how ready we are to answer them.

*Blue/Orange* premiered at the National Theatre in 2000, and won the Olivier Award for Best New Play. The play is a three-hander, and the premise is simple. Christopher, a patient, is due to be discharged the next day from a psychiatric ward, but his doctor has reservations concerning his diagnosis and his delusions. He discusses these with his consultant, and what ensues is a power struggle between the junior and senior clinicians, in which the needs of Christopher all but disappear.

Christopher is a young black man being treated by two white doctors, and at the time of the premiere, the play raised huge issues about psychiatry, diagnosis, ethnicity and the monetary cost of care. Sixteen years on, the Young Vic is staging a revival, and I went to see it with Dr Arsime Demjaha, a psychiatrist specialising in psychosis, to see what had changed.

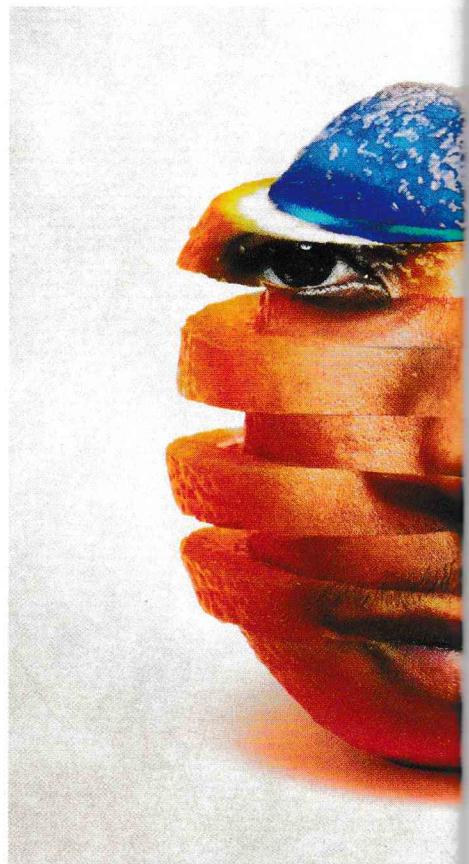
The premise of the play may be simple, but the play itself is incredibly complex, and raises a myriad of issues. The staging is spot on: as we took our seats, Dr Demjaha leaned across to me – 'that looks exactly like my office'. (Apart from the ashtray, that is – was it really only 16 years ago when patients would routinely smoke in consultations?) As the junior psychiatrist, Bruce, enters, they've got him spot on too, right down to the top button undone under his tie, the precisely rolled up sleeves, and the way he wears his belt slightly down at the front, with his NHS ID clipped to one side of the belt, and a pager to the other.

Luke Norris as Bruce exudes the earnestness and naivety befitting his role. The play starts and there is humour, but it's dark. Bruce to Christopher: 'What does alcohol do?' Christopher to Bruce: 'It makes your blood thin.'... Bruce: 'Sorted'. Christopher: 'Sorted for Es and whiz'. Bruce... 'Indeed'. We learn that Christopher is expecting to go home the next day, but also that Bruce isn't entirely comfortable with that idea. Our loyalties are divided – is Christopher really so ill that he has to stay in hospital? Or is he just a little exuberant? The first diagnostic term is used: borderline personality disorder, and Bruce voices his reservations about this diagnosis for the first time. Daniel Kaluuya, as Christopher, owns the stage with his reaction.

In the interval I discuss this with Dr Demjaha, who is clear from the outset that borderline personality disorder is a misdiagnosis, and that Christopher has psychotic symptoms and is very unwell indeed. For the rest of us, without the benefit of her psychiatric training, it takes a little longer fully to understand the extent of Christopher's illness.

The playwright Joe Penhall clearly understands psychosis and schizophrenia. I met him a week after watching the play, and asked him why he chose to write *Blue/Orange*. He says it was a coming together of many things. He had a friend with schizophrenia who had spiralled into alcoholism and homelessness. Alongside this Penhall spent two weeks working alongside another friend with borderline personality disorder providing support to people with schizophrenia: 'another acute, visceral insight'. At about the same time in the early 1990s he was a reporter on the *Hammersmith Guardian*, regularly reporting on stories about the Care in the Community initiative. He wrote a feature about people being released too early and resources being overstretched, but felt he couldn't quite communicate the essence of what the story was. *Blue/Orange* was born out of his realisation that this subject was inherently dramatic, emotional, visceral, and something that couldn't really be captured in a newspaper. For Penhall, *Blue/Orange* was a microcosm of the economic rationalisation and monetarisation he observed going on everywhere at that time, but at its worst in the mental health sector. Bizarrely another of Penhall's projects also informed the play. While working on early drafts of a film about Idi Amin, he interviewed the Ugandan dictator's psychiatrist, who spoke to him about Amin's grandiose, delusional nature. Amin does make a cameo in the play, not as a character, but as one of Christopher's delusions. Penhall had tried to write *Blue/Orange* several times, but his work researching Idi Amin was 'the final piece of the puzzle'.

Penhall told me he wanted to write about power, and power within the institution. Robert, the senior consultant psychiatrist and Bruce's boss (beautifully hammed up by David Haig), is a mechanism by which he explores this. Robert is immediately unappealing and inappropriate, ignoring Christopher and making sexual jokes about Bruce's wife. Dr Demjaha pointed out to me that from the beginning, Christopher is invisible to Robert apart from when Robert needs himben@ben-harley.com



to satisfy his own ends. Although a key tenet of psychiatric treatment is patient-centred care, there is none of that on this stage. Penhall told me it wasn't his intention to pillory psychiatry *per se*, and that he doesn't believe any psychiatrist would behave like Robert, either then or now. The fact that the two doctors talk about their patient as though he isn't there, even when he's on the stage with them, was poetic licence, and a kind of metaphor for how people are conspired against because of their lack of articulacy, and their lack of vernacular...and their lack of privilege and their lack of education... and they become a football... and the play is a sort of crude satire of that'.

Robert veers into the absurd as he justifies discharging Christopher. It will be bad for Robert's career, and for Bruce's too. Robert uses spurious arguments to dismiss all of Bruce's protestations, and then Bruce uses the second diagnostic term: schizophrenia. An interlude where they bat diagnoses backwards and forwards between them is funny, if tragic for Christopher. But then Penhall uses Robert to ratchet up the drama. Nobody likes the idea of people losing their liberty, and from the mouth of this thoroughly unlikeable man come words we want to believe: 'If you keep him here, he won't be able to go home because he won't know what home is any more... treat him in the home – he's more comfortable, we're more comfortable.' There's more. We can all relate to Robert's statement 'We blithely assume that we know what "normal" is...'



that he wanted to demystify the popular fallacy that the mad are sane and the sane are mad.

Throughout the play there is something else – an issue of ethnicity. Robert moves along the spectrum from mild cultural assumption through to ethnocentrism. How many steps from racist is he? Penhall says Robert may be ethnocentric, but he's not racist, at least, he's no more racist than middle England. Robert's racism is part of his power struggle with Bruce, and Bruce's injudicious use of the n-word is manna from heaven for Robert in that struggle.

I turned to the scientific literature to see what I could find about psychosis and ethnicity. Fearon et al. (2006) in the AESOP study examined all those presenting with psychotic symptoms in southeast London, Bristol and Nottingham, and 'found remarkably high incidence rate ratios for both schizophrenia and manic psychosis in both African-Caribbeans', in fact a five- to tenfold difference in incidence, when compared with the UK white population. Other studies suggest rates of schizophrenia in the Caribbean are comparable to the UK white population (Bughra et al., 1996; Hickling & Rodgers-Johnson, 1995; Mahy, 1999). There's also a question of whether someone is more likely to be compulsorily detained for their disorder. Morgan et al (2005) report that in the AESOP sample 'African-Caribbean patients were significantly more likely to be compulsorily admitted than White British patients, as were Black African patients'. So what is going on? Fearon et al. (2006) don't get beyond 'additional risk factors... [which] increase risk for schizophrenia and mania in these groups'. In 2015 Tortelli et al. considered this and other evidence in a systematic review, and listed several potential candidates for these elusive 'factors', offering up for discussion (but broadly discounting) cannabis use, social deprivation, population density, and inequality as increasing risk for psychotic disorders in black and minority ethnic groups, landing on cumulative social disadvantage and adverse life events in childhood. These appear to be more prevalent in black Caribbean and African communities in England, and present an increased risk for schizophrenia. Morgan et al. (2005) similarly attribute their findings on compulsory admission to 'factors'. They found that diagnosis and perceived risk are independently associated with compulsory admission, but neither of these could actually account for the excess rates of compulsory admissions. Social isolation accounted for only a small proportion of the variance, as did the pathway to care, in other words, how the patient had been referred to services. Morgan et al. (2005) state up front

maybe we're the sick ones.' However, Robert is clearly far from the archetypal wise psychiatrist whose understanding of humanity surpasses all others. Penhall summed it up to me eloquently: 'He's appropriating liberalism, a fascinating technique that was pioneered in the 90s... appropriating a seemingly liberal argument... that a person should be free; [appropriating liberalism] for the sake of expediency, the rationalisation, cost cutting.... it seemed like an appalling trick to me.'

If Robert's arguments ever were reasonable, they are demolished the more we see how unwell Christopher is, and the more Robert alludes to the cost of keeping him in hospital. This is where the *Blue/Orange* comes in. Christopher thinks that oranges are blue, even though he knows on some level that they are not. Idi Amin also makes his entrance here. Christopher discloses that he is the son of the Ugandan dictator, but is increasingly uneasy. His determination to go home wavers, and he tries to find a way to ask to stay. Robert however is having none of it. He has manipulated Bruce, is manipulating Christopher, and has manipulated the audience. Dr Demjaha pointed out to me that Robert himself becomes almost as delusional as his patient – delusional about his position, and delusional with the increasingly florid arguments he concocts to prove that he is right about Christopher, and that Bruce is wrong. Penhall says however

their bewilderment: 'The question thus remains: what processes are operating compulsory admission for African-Caribbean patients, particularly men, and Black African patients?'

So, can *Blue/Orange* answer that question? As a scientist I have to say no – it's a play, it's not a programme of research that systematically tests a hypothesis. But as a theatre-goer, I have to say *Blue/Orange* is for me one of those pieces of work which scratches an itch that science does not seem to have been able to reach. Penhall explains: 'The great thing about art is you can say what you want to say. There's no scientific exigency. You don't have to be objective... You can climb in with your views, and if something appears to you to be intuitively self-evident, an empirically measured truth that you've experienced, then you are at liberty to divulge it.' I asked him what was that truth in this play, for him. 'That ethnocentrism and cultural assumptions and eventually institutional racism is everywhere, in all strata of our society to some degree, on a continuum, on a spectrum.'

This play about hierarchical power struggles, and the place of those at the bottom of the hierarchy, has lost none of its power in the 16 years since I first saw it. What has changed I believe is that care is more patient-centred than it was. But can we say the same about power abuses within hierarchical structures? That appears to still be a work in progress.

**I** *Blue/Orange* is on at the Young Vic until 2 July (see [www.youngvic.org/whats-on/blue-orange](http://www.youngvic.org/whats-on/blue-orange))

**Reviewed by Dr Sally Marlow** who is Public Engagement Fellow at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London

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## Integrity and sensitivity



Louis Theroux – A Different Brain  
Jamie Pickup (Director)

When I was first asked by our Communications Team if I would be willing to collaborate with BBC Two on a programme about brain injury I was unsure. On the one hand, the true impact of brain injury, which is often referred to as a 'hidden disability', is only ever fully experienced by those involved, so the idea of a documentary to help promote awareness and understanding of the real-life struggles of those affected seemed an opportunity too good to miss.

On the other hand, the presenter was to be Louis Theroux. I had always enjoyed his weird and wonderful documentaries, but his choice of subject matter had ranged from 'The Most Hated Family in America' to sex workers in a brothel in Nevada. I was not sure if I felt happy allowing him access to the vulnerable adults with whom I work on a daily basis.

The series producer quickly reassured me. He explained about Louis' more recent work around dementia, transgender children and subjects that involve complex human dilemmas. He also said that although final editorial control would rest with the BBC, The Brain Injury Rehabilitation Trust (BIRT) would be able to veto anything if we had a valid concern regarding the integrity of the Trust or privacy of an individual.

With the support of BIRT's Communications Manager, we invited the producer and an assistant to come to our Halloween party at Redford Court in Liverpool. This was a good opportunity for them to meet the people we support and their families in an informal setting, and for us to assess their reaction to the idea of being part of a documentary. I was delighted with the interest they expressed. It was clear that they saw a value in telling their stories so that others might understand the challenge of changes after brain injury.

Over several weeks the production team visited Redford Court and followed the everyday life of the centre; sitting in on reviews, attending assessments of new referrals and going out on rehabilitation activities. Once it was decided that BIRT would be involved, a great deal of effort was taken to assess capacity and



gain the consent of those to be filmed.

Having Louis at the centre created a great deal of excitement, and I was impressed at the ease with which he spoke to service users and was happy with the ever requested 'selfie'.

Initially the crew filmed various activities with a range of people, but over time they began to narrow their focus to a few individuals to allow their stories to be told and to present the complexity of their lives following brain injury and the impact this had on their families. As a result, it was important to manage the expectations of those who had been interviewed but would not be part of the final documentary.

Louis and the crew were always accompanied by a member of our clinical team and we were all impressed by the integrity and sensitivity they showed and how they managed a number of emotionally charged situations.

Six months and over 70 hours of filming later, I was delighted at the result, a thought-provoking and honest documentary that will raise awareness of the issues surrounding brain injury and the role psychology has to play in the rehabilitation process.

I By Ivan M. Pitman who is Clinical Lead/Consultant Clinical Neuropsychologist at the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Trust

## Full of facts



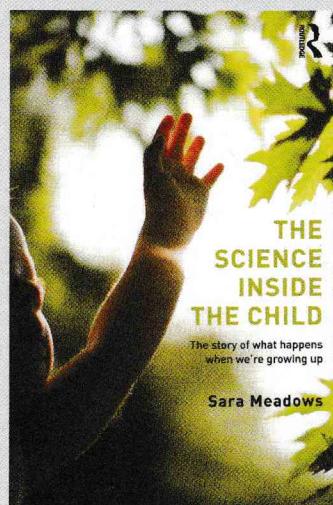
The Science Inside the Child: The Story of What Happens When We're Growing Up  
Sara Meadows

When it comes to children, I am a bit of a brain geek. Working out how children think and what wires their brains together is what fires me up in the morning. So this book ought to have been my ideal gift.

And it is a truly admirable book. Sara Meadows sets out to summarise everything that science currently tells us about how children develop. Encyclopaedic in scope, each chapter examines the science of children from a different angle – from genetics to

psychoneuroendocrinology to epidemiology and beyond. A commitment to scientific method runs throughout this book and Meadows' rigorous examination of the evidence base is welcome in a field where so many so-called 'parenting experts' base theories of bringing up children on anecdote and subjective experience.

But all that science makes a tough read. Meadows is clear from the outset that this is not a parenting manual and explicitly sets out not to translate the



science into policy recommendations or practical advice. But the lack of interpretation left me constantly

wondering 'And...? So what? How do I apply this?'

The result is a book packed full of facts in epic taster chapters on neuroscience, evolution and psychology, which I can see myself referring back to for memory refreshers and starting points, but in which there is simply too much science and not enough story.

I Routledge; 2016; Pb £19.99  
Reviewed by Anita Cleare who is a parenting writer, speaker and coach



## So what shall we do today? And why it matters

Academic Diary  
Les Back

Readers can forget the academic diary notion. The subtitle – *Or Why Higher Education Still Matters* – is more important. Les Back's book contains over 50 short page commentaries on topics relevant to higher education today. The diary device may be useful for some topics, but it is not important and it seems odd to start with graduation. I have never met Les Back, and I am not sure that I would want to. With one stroke he could probably demolish any views that I might have on higher education.

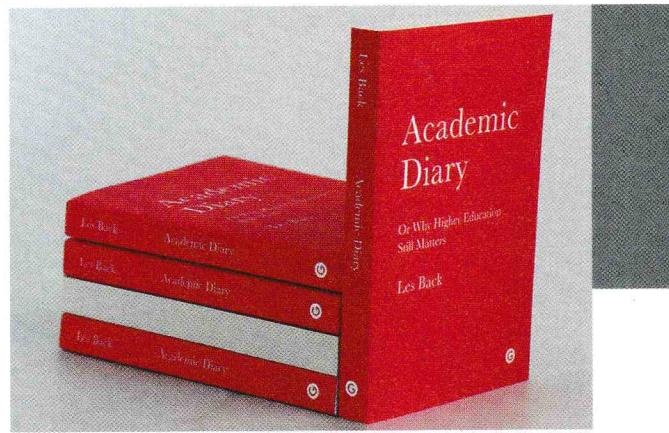
Actually this is unfair – we would probably both have a fascinating discussion as we have been in higher education for more years than we would care to remember. Back's book is a powerful criticism of modern university life, but there are sometimes gentler words about its aims, its staff, its students, and even its administrators!

Written in three parts (to match the

three academic terms), there are commentaries on issues such as preparing for open days and welcome weeks, the new year's honours list, public libraries, prison education, student fees, the social etiquette of conferencing, academic writing, the viva, the value of personal notebooks, Twitter, and the double-think of open access, to name but a dozen of the 52 entries.

Mixed in with daily vignettes are insightful comments on the contributions of key figures: Stuart Hall, Richard Hoggart, John Berger, Primo Levy, Zygmunt Bauman, Vic Seidler, etc., as well as those of other less well-known authors, and students. Back concludes with a section on how the book came to be written and a useful set of tips, leads and follow-ups. An author index might have been helpful here.

This *Academic Diary* is the first book to



be published by Goldsmiths Press – a new venture at Goldsmiths University. It is good to see a new university press in this time of austerity. If all its books are like this one it will do well.

Reviewed by James Hartley who is Emeritus Professor of Psychology, Keele University



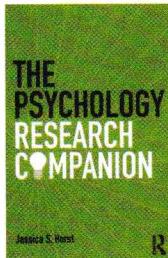
## Adding it to my reading list

The Psychology Research Companion  
Jessica S. Horst

*The Psychology Research Companion* is just what I've been looking for to support my research methods skills teaching for master's students. This book goes beyond the usual textbook research methods textbooks by outlining and clearly explaining the skills that researchers need in order to succeed in research, such as: collaboration, time management, data organisation, managing IT, presentation and writing tips. The advice provided goes beyond the generic and is specific to the research process. For example, advice on how to get an email answered and using mail merge as part of the participant recruitment provides a level of detail often missing in standard texts. In another example, in the section on Excel, Jessica provides many tips for simple checks for data, such as for checking whether values are above or below a certain cut-off count: IF(D2:D21, ">10").

There is an abundance of excellent advice on organising files and folders. I often spend a lot of time with project students unpicking a tangle of files types all labelled 'dissertation', some of which are chapters, some are questionnaires, some are stimuli information, other files are data, others are raw data. There is a whole chapter called 'all in a day's work' devoted to organising data and information from storing journal articles to tracking participants and managing their data, all of which is invaluable for students managing their research projects.

Another important feature of the book is that these skills are explicitly shown how they are transferrable to other forms of employment. If 'employability' is a term you hear in your teaching environment, this book fits the bill by translating the research skills learned from psychology degrees into many employment competencies expected from employers.



contribute

I give students advice similar to that outlined in this book on a daily basis. I am now able to offer a page reference in this book for students to follow up. I will be adding this book to my reading list for my students as part of their professional skills development within their research methods training.

Reviewed by Laura Biggart who is a Lecturer in Psychology in the School of Psychology, University of East Anglia, Norwich

Find more online, including artist Toby Brown on his portraits of mental health problems ([www.thepsychologist.org.uk/me-eyes-tell-story](http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk/me-eyes-tell-story)).

'Reviews' covers psychology in all forms of media and beyond. So if you have seen or heard anything psychological recently – TV, radio, play, film, exhibition, podcast, a useful website, etc. – get in touch. E-mail the editor on [jon.sutton@bps.org.uk](mailto:jon.sutton@bps.org.uk) or tweet @psychmag.

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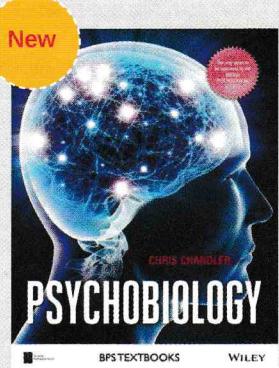
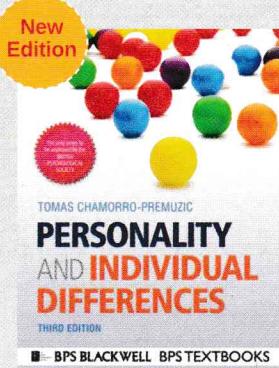
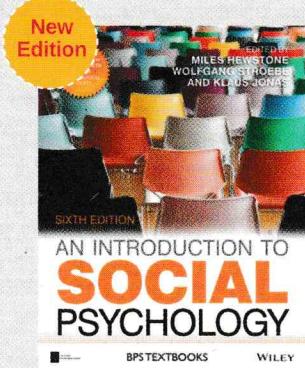
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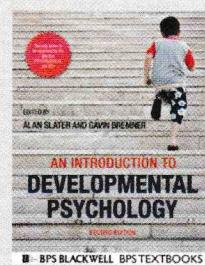
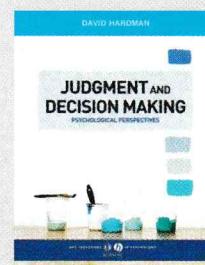
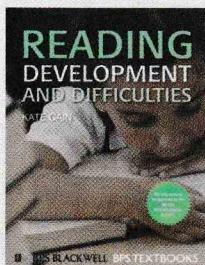
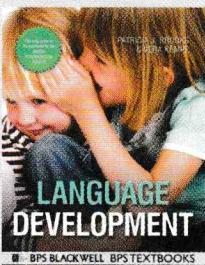
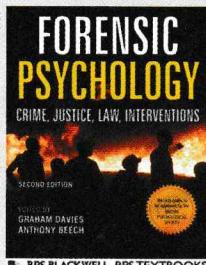
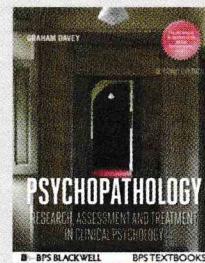
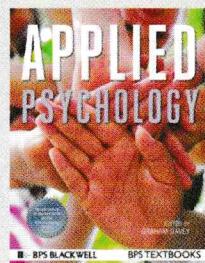
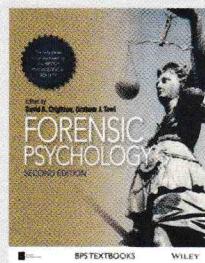
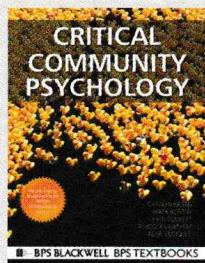
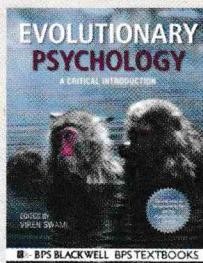
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## Quality and longevity

Dorothy Bishop celebrates the career of one of her academic heroes, as he reaches 100

**R**euben Conrad, like Inspector Morse, was never known by his first name. To his colleagues he has always been just Conrad. He has long been one of my academic heroes, and it is a great pleasure to have this opportunity to celebrate his long and distinguished career as he reaches the grand old age of 100. When he was a mere stripling of 89, Conrad was one of the first people to be interviewed for the Oral History Project of the British Psychological Society, by Evelyn Fenton, and it was a delight to be able to listen to his tales of life as a psychologist after demobilisation in 1946.

Those tapes presented a vivid picture of life as a research psychologist in the second half of the last century – a life remarkably different to that of today. Many changes are for the better: for a start there was a startling lack of women in the psychological world that Conrad inhabited. He would hardly recognise the profession as it is today, where women equal or outnumber men in most subdisciplines. There was also a lack of professionalism, which provided opportunities for an ‘old boy network’ to ensure that jobs and opportunities were given to the ‘right sort’ of person, with a handful of powerful figures able to make or break careers without any accountability. Teaching appears to have been haphazard – often, in the circles in UCL and Cambridge where Conrad trained, inspirational, but at other times inadequate.

But while musing on how things had changed, I also had a sense of nostalgia for an academic environment that could foster someone like Conrad. I wonder if he would have survived as a researcher in the modern age, where success hinges on publications in ‘high impact’ journals and grant income. Conrad is the opposite of flashy and self-promoting: during his time as a researcher, he was far more interested in solving practical problems than in making major theoretical advances. He would take time to get things right, rather than rushing out results. The quality and longevity of his work demonstrates the

value of such an approach – his work on decay and confusions in short-term memory, and on inner speech in the deaf, is still cited today.

Conrad went up to University College London in 1938, when psychology was a new subsidiary subject that was generally regarded as an easy option. He tells how he was completely hooked on psychology by Cyril Burt, who gave vivid and dramatic lectures, at one point arriving with a chimpanzee that he had borrowed from London Zoo. Conrad could not remember what point Burt was trying to illustrate, but he remembered the chimpanzee. In 1939 at the outbreak of war, the UCL Psychology Department was evacuated to Aberystwyth, where Conrad remembers a handful of students enjoying Burt’s engaging seminars as they walked along the promenade. But the war endured and so young men were having to join the Army. Conrad was all set to be shipped off to India as an anti-tank gunner, when he was told that Burt had asked that he should go and work with him in the War Office. But Burt subsequently fell out with the War Office, and Conrad found himself back in the Army, where he ended up with no degree but considerable expertise in artillery.

When the war ended, he wanted to complete his interrupted degree, but realised he was much more interested in occupational psychology than in Burt’s favourite topic, factor analysis. He realised that Cambridge would be the ideal place for him, but he had to persuade them to give him a place as a mature student. Frederick Bartlett, whom Conrad described as excessively talkative, and intimidating – ‘thin and willowy, like a spiral going up into the stratosphere’ – was prepared to give him a place, provided he could find a college who would accept him. That was not easy,

but eventually Conrad won through and found himself in the Psychology Department in Cambridge, with a whole cohort of ex-servicemen, including Donald Broadbent, Malcolm Piercy and Christopher Poulton.

Conrad’s path to a research career was not straightforward. He had done an undergraduate project with Bartlett that had worked out well, and Bartlett had offered him a job at the MRC Applied Psychology Unit on the strength of it. However, when Conrad’s final examination results came out, they were so bad that he felt he should write to Bartlett suggesting he was free to withdraw the job offer. Fortunately for Conrad, Bartlett would hear nothing of this, and so Conrad was launched on a career at the APU.

Conrad’s PhD viva was another unedifying experience. He had the strong impression that neither of his examiners (Alan Welford and James Drever) had actually read the thesis, and he was so discouraged by their lack of interest that he turned away from the topic – how people allocate their attention to simultaneously perform several time-dependent tasks, and moved on to study memory.

“The fact that we have one of the most memorable postcode systems in the world is largely down to Conrad”

The Unit had originally been housed in the Psychology Department, but was eventually relocated to its current premises – a large house in leafy Chaucer Road about a mile from the city centre. There’s a story that Norman Mackworth, the new Director after Bartlett, saw the house on the market, decided it was perfect for his Unit, made an offer on it, and then wrote to MRC Head Office to tell them they would have to pay for it. And they agreed. It proved to be a wise investment: the accommodation was pleasant and allowed the Unit to expand to become one of the major centres of psychological research in the UK.

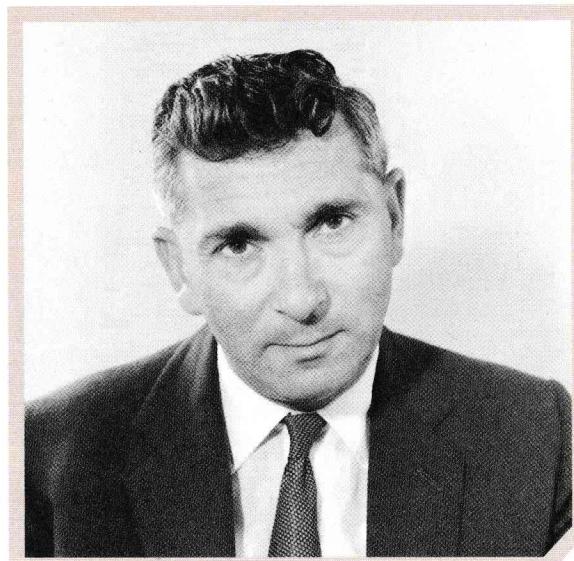
A marked feature of Conrad’s research was that he wanted to do things that would be useful, and in particular to apply psychology to problems confronted by civilian workers. He was never all that interested in theory unless it could help him understand everyday problems. The APU had a long tradition of doing research on naval ratings, but Conrad wanted to look at how human factors influenced people working in settings such as factories. For a long time he found this pursuit difficult: he made slow progress, did not publish much and felt it was rather a lonely theme to be working

on. A breakthrough came when he got together with a small group of like-minded people to found the Ergonomics Society, and met a man who was a consultant to the Post Office. He introduced Conrad to the administrators there, and he persuaded them that they could benefit from psychology. For instance, if a telephone keypad was designed in an optimal way, there would be fewer misdialed numbers, which could lead to a substantial saving for the Post Office. Similarly, with postcodes: what was needed was a code that could accommodate three million addresses, to facilitate automated sorting of letters, but it had to be easy to use, or people would just not use it. The UK postcode system was the result of masses of experiments that confirmed that what worked best was a code that included a letter part that had a clear relationship to the place name, followed by a series of digits and letters that specified the precise address, with letter and digits in a standardised place. Because in a sequence digits are easier to recall than letters, they were put in the middle of the code, and hard-to-recall consonants went at the easier far end. The fact that we have one of the most memorable postcode systems in the world is largely down to Conrad.

Although Conrad was not trying to develop theory, findings of theoretical importance forced themselves upon his attention. He had previously noticed that when people were asked to remember a series of letters, they tended to confuse certain letters, like D and T and E. Conrad initially thought that this was due to poor equipment: the memory lists were played to experimental subjects over a tape-recorder, and it was assumed that poor acoustic quality was responsible for the errors. However, in the 1960s Conrad took a sabbatical at Ann Arbor where there was a much higher level of computational and technical sophistication, and he returned with a piece of equipment that enabled him to test memory in groups of subjects by presenting letter series in a visual array. To his great surprise, the error patterns were just like he had observed when people were listening to letter lists. This led to the insight that verbal information is encoded into an acoustic form in memory regardless of whether it is received visually or acoustically.

Conrad's career took a dramatic turn in 1968 when he was greatly affected by

the death of his wife. By this time he was deputy director of the Unit, but this tragedy devastated him and made him lose all interest in his research. After six months, he felt he had to get away from Cambridge and change what he was doing. Conrad had a boat moored in the middle of a river on an east coast estuary and he decided to go and stay there until he had worked out what to do with his life. He described the experience of going through a set of options and seeing if any of them rang a bell in his head. He found that the idea of working with children elicited a faint tinkling, and helping people with handicaps produced a loud clang. He had the sudden insight that all the work he had done on acoustic processing in memory was enormously relevant: if internal acoustics are important for memory, what happens if



you are deaf and don't have internal acoustics? Conrad emerged from his cabin after a week and went to talk to Sir Harold Himsworth, then head of the Medical Research Council and described his idea. What happened next would astound anyone used to current procedures for grant applications. 'Give me half a page of paper describing your plans,' he was told. He did so, and the plan was approved.

Conrad could be regarded as the father of 'slow science', because having determined what he wanted to do, he realised he needed to find out much more about deaf children. He got himself seconded to the Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital in London where he taught some psychology while learning about deafness. After about three years, he was ready to start a major project, and his friend

Larry Weiskrantz, then head of the Experimental Psychology Department in Oxford, suggested he relocate there. This was a good decision – not only did it get Conrad away from Cambridge, with its sad memories, it also was geographically far more suitable for a project that involved seeing children from all over the country. One thing Conrad was clear about: he would need a very large sample, because there were many variables that could affect results. He decided that with his dedicated team his goal would be to test every deaf school leaver in the country.

It is the body of resulting work, published in 1979 as a book *The Deaf School Child*, which first made me aware of Conrad's seminal contribution. It was very clearly written, and almost like a novel in taking the reader through the different aspects of the study. It was also a beautiful piece of applied psychology, using insights from studies of short-term memory to design tasks for deaf children that would probe 'what was going on in their heads', as Conrad put it in his interview. When he found out, he was horrified at the mismatch between how deaf children processed information and how they were educated. The UK at that time was in the grip of 'oralism' – the idea that deaf children should learn to speak with the help of hearing aids and lip-reading. Sign language was banned because it was thought it would interfere with the acquisition of oral language. Conrad debunked all of these ideas. He showed that oralism simply did not work, but that instead of 'inner speech', deaf children could use 'inner sign'. Thus by depriving deaf children of the opportunity to sign, teachers were hindering rather than helping their education. It took years, but people did eventually listen. Many younger teachers were very ready to act on his message: it was the old establishment who had been promoting oralism for years who resisted. But ultimately, they could not hold out against the overwhelming evidence produced by Conrad: if you want to teach a profoundly deaf child, you need to do so in a medium they can access. Conrad is a quiet and unassuming man, but when describing this part of his life, he says with justifiable pride: 'We really did turn the thing around.'

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... with Professor Dame Til Wykes

## 'Feistiness in the face of a challenge'

### One album

After considering jiggling round to Tamla Motown, chilling with Mozart and being uplifted by Tracy Chapman I have plumped for *Stop Making Sense*, by Talking Heads. This album reminds me of a crowded bus over the Andes with my two children, aged four and five, singing 'Life During Wartime'. The resonance of life under gunfire is not lost, especially with the current Syrian crisis.

### One pressing concern

For years UK mental health services budgets were raided to shore up acute care. Promised investment is always jam tomorrow or recycled jam and never closes the gap on a service under increasing pressure. People with mental health problems are so often not heard or are silenced by thoughts of the discrimination they might face if they do speak out. Parity of mental and physical health seems impossible even in research.

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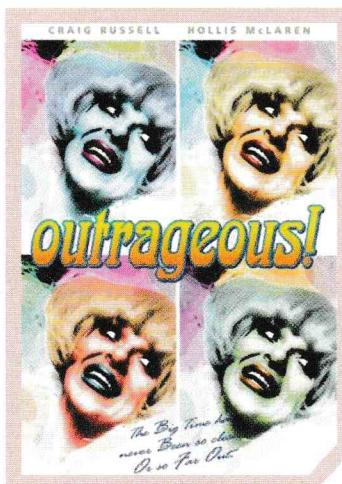
ocean, friendly people and a national sport, cricket, which is played only by women.

### One inspiration

Mums can be scientists! Knowing inspirational (and normal) 'Women in Science' is a real support as I sit in rooms full of grey suits. So hats off to Sally Davies, Athene Donald and Jane Wardle – all of whom did their bit to show what is possible and have achieved important things for society.

### One reason you became a psychologist

I wasn't tall enough to reach the books on architecture or accountancy.



### One proud moment

Defying the odds to become a Dame. The predictive factors for getting a knighthood are a private education, Oxbridge degree and being a man. So coming from a working-class background, living in a council house for most of my early life, state educated and the only one of my generation to go to university didn't boost my chances for club membership. There must be some 'resilience factors' and they are probably an irritation with a slow pace of change, feistiness in the face of challenge, and strong family support.

### One film

*Outrageous* (Canadian Film, Director Richard Benner, 1977, based on *The Butterfly*

*Ward* by Margaret Gibson). It's a comedy built around two roommates – an aspiring drag queen and a young woman with a diagnosis of schizophrenia. It tells of their problems and successes as they make their way in a world full of discrimination. Craig Russell's performances as Joan Crawford and Barbara Streisand are truly memorable. There's no 'happily ever after' ending, but there is hope that these personal journeys will produce fulfilling lives despite all the bumps in the road.

### One paper

Jerome Frank's 1974 paper on the restoration of morale

as the sole aim of any psychotherapy. Effectively what Frank was saying is that we are all just second-hand car salesmen flogging one paradigm or another to produce the same outcome – improved morale. He suggests that therapists should master as many models as possible and then match their approach to the individual before them. This was written way before the current enthusiasm for personalised therapies. I have often wondered if it would be possible to carry out a trial where different case formulations were randomly assigned to clients to see if there are any differences. The outcome would really depend on the therapist's selling ability. But it is probably (not definitely) unethical.

### One secret for success

Patience and persistence – I ran a campaign to provide a National Statutory Minimum Wage, mainly to persuade trade unions. Even after it became Labour Party policy, it took another 18 years to be enacted. Boy, was that a day for celebration! Persistence is also vital if you want to be an academic – grants do not come easily, papers are rejected. You just need to keep trying.

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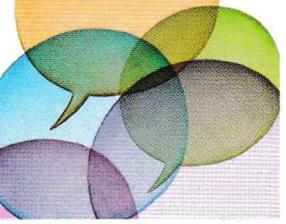
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**PPB Lifetime Achievement Award – call for nominations** See p.518

**Award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychology in Practice – call for nominations**  
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**BPS Annual Conference, Brighton, 3–5 May 2017** See p.i

**Psychology4Students/Psychology4Graduates 2016** See p.iv

**Technical Support in Psychological Teaching Award – call for nominations** See p.535

**Technical Support in Psychological Research Award – call for nominations** See p.535

**DCP Faculty for Children, Young People and Their Families Annual Conference, Sheffield, 4–5 October 2016** See p.535

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**PPB Practitioner of the Year Award – call for nominations** See p.546

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**Developmental Psychology Section Annual Conference, Belfast, 14–16 September 2016**  
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*Extract from The Charter*



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